



S E A L O F E V I L





SEAL OF EVIL



Contents

SEAL OF EVIL.....	1
SEAL OF EVIL.....	3
1. STORY BACKGROUND	8
1.1 Background.....	8
1.2 The Emyrean Stones.....	9
1.3 Leading Character.....	12
2. GAME FEATURES.....	13
3. RUNNING ENVIRONMENT	17
3.1 Minimum.....	17
3.2 Recommended	17
4. INSTALL AND UNINSTALL.....	19
4.1 How to install.....	19
4.2 Uninstall	20
5. MAIN MENU.....	21
5.1 Getting Started.....	22
5.2 Options.....	23
5.2.1 Game Settings.....	23
5.2.2 Help	24
5.3 Credits.....	25
5.4 Exit.....	26
6. HOW TO PLAY	27
6.1 Control Panel	27
6.2 Party Control	28
6.3 System Menu Interface.....	29
6.4 Move, Talk and Fight	30
6.5 Pointer.....	30



6.6 Pause.....	31
6.7 Obtain Items	31
6.8 Use Skills.....	33
6.9 Quests and Log	33
6.10 Map.....	36
6.11 Save and Load	37
6.12 Quick-Save	39
7. CHARACTERS	40
7.1 Heroes.....	40
7.1.1 Lan Wei	40
7.1.2 Yan Hong.....	42
7.1.3 Liang Hu	43
7.1.4 Cai Xin.....	44
7.1.5 Gai Nie.....	46
7.2 Character's Attributes.....	47
7.2.1 Basic Attributes	47
7.2.2 Attribute Interface.....	48
7.2.3 Character Attribute Upgrade	49
7.3 Enemy.....	49
7.3.1 Enemy's Attribute.....	49
7.3.2 Enemies	52
7.4 NPCs.....	57
8. SKILLS.....	60
8.1 The Skill System.....	60
8.1.1 How to learn and upgrade skills	60
8.1.2 Skill and skill description interface	62
8.1.3 Skill effects	63
8.2 Skill Descriptions	65



8.2.1 Witch's skills	65
8.2.2 Beastman's skills	67
8.2.3 Wizard's skills	69
8.2.4 Assassin's skills	70
8.2.5 Paladin's skills	72
8.3 Hotkey Skills	74
8.3.1 Left and right-handed skills	74
8.3.2 Allocate shortcut skills	75
8.3.3 Define Auto-skills	77
9. ITEMS	78
9.1 Item Type	78
9.2 Controls Concerning Items	88
9.2.1 Item Interface	88
9.2.2 Shared Inventory	90
9.2.3 Use Items	91
9.2.4 Exchange Items	91
9.2.5 Drop Items	91
9.2.6 Piled Items	92
9.2.7 Shortcut Item Boxes	92
9.3 Equip Weapons and Armor	92
9.3.1 Equip Interface	93
9.3.2 How to equip	94
9.4 Item Attributes	95
9.4.1 Item's Five-element attributes	95
9.4.2 Item's Secondary Attributes	96
9.5 Concealed Attributes of Items	99
9.6 A Set of Equipment	101
10. ITEM CREATION AND ITEM UPGRADE	103



10.1 Item Creation	103
10.1.1 Material Classification.....	103
10.1.2 Material Collection	104
10.1.3 Item Creation Skills	104
10.1.4 How to create an item.....	104
10.1.5 Tips for Item Creation	107
10.2 Upgrade Equipment.....	108
10.2.1 How to upgrade your equipment	108
10.2.2 Tips for Upgrade.....	108
11. CONTROL	109
11.1 The Space Button.....	109
11.2 Other Shortcut Keys	110
12. CREDITS	112
Appendix I The Game Map	
Appendix II The Concept of the Five Elements	
Appendix III Historical Background	
Appendix IV Jing Ke: Hero Assassin	



1. STORY BACKGROUND

1.1 Background

The Seal of Evil story is set in the twilight years of the Warring States period of Chinese history (476 – 206 BC). This turbulent time marks the disintegration of the longest lived of all Chinese imperial dynasties—the Zhou, which gave the Chinese people some of its greatest thinkers (Confucius and Mencius) as well as some of its most important cultural achievements (the Great Wall). It is also unfortunately a time of great conflict, when the seven disparate nations dominating the social and political landscape vie for supremacy all the while resisting periodic invasions from the Huns, northern barbarians whose viciousness and tenacity seem to know no boundaries or limits.

Out of this strife and chaos emerges a nobleman possessed of an indomitable spirit and an uncompromising vision of the future: Ying Zheng, king of the Qin state and the future emperor of the Qin Dynasty. His troops are well-trained and even better organized. Fighting on many fronts, they manage to win one victory after another. They are not an army of liberation, however, but one of suppression and domination. Ying Zheng will succeed, no matter the cost. He will unify China or bury it in the fires of oblivion.

In the southwestern part of China, his soldiers have met strong resistance in East Baiyue. The Baiyun are a proud and honorable



people. They regard the Qin king as little more than a power hungry despot, and they are right. Wanting nothing to do with him or his particular form of tyranny, the Baiyun resist. Sadly, years earlier the country of West Baiyue had already fallen to the Qin, leaving the East to fend for itself. A great warrior chieftain named Lan Xiong and his best friend and chief sacrificial wizard, Chi Huan, lead the remaining Baiyun. Although not at all eager for battle and bloodshed, they will nonetheless not give up without a fight. Then on the eve of war, Lan and Chi die suddenly of mysterious causes. East Baiyue no longer has leadership and guidance. All seems hopeless.

Lan Wei, the heir to Lan Xiong's mantle of authority, is distraught. Lacking confidence in her own abilities to lead the Baiyun to war and unable to unify them the way her father would have, she decides her only course of action is to seek the mythical Empyrean Stones. If the legends and stories are correct, the five stones will enable her to bring Lan Xiong back from the dead. He is her only hope for saving East Baiyue from the Qin menace...

1.2 The Empyrean Stones

Thousands of years before the Warring States period, a god named Chi You rebelled against the authority of Heaven because he was jealous of his brethren. The Yellow Emperor, the god who is regarded as the ancestor of the Chinese people, went to war against his brother and after one hundred years of battle defeated him. He would not have won if were not for the ancestors of the Baiyun people turning on Chi You, who had until that point been their patron deity. The Yellow Emperor imprisoned his soul in a slate platform using the magic of an enchanted stone tablet. To ensure the demon god could never escape, he broke the



enchanted tablet into five pieces and then scattered them to the four winds. These are the Empyrean Stones.

The Yellow Emperor also punished Chi You's cohorts. The demon god Xing Tian he punished by cutting off his head and burying it under a mountain. Xing Tian subsequently grew a new pair of eyes on his chest and a new mouth on his stomach, but he still fled, sufficiently cowed by the Yellow Emperor's might. Chi You's other lieutenant, a bold, beautiful demonic goddess named Mei, had her physical form utterly destroyed by the Emperor. However, of all the gods and goddesses in Heaven she was the only one who had ever had the power to live outside her body spiritually. Although the loss of her own body was tragic, it was not nearly as bad as the Yellow Emperor had assumed for she could still roam the world of humanity at will and claim any other physical form she desired.

Unbeknownst to the rulers of Heaven, Chi You's spirit did not indeed lie dormant inside his stone tomb. He secretly bade Mei to move amongst the mortal creatures of the Middle Kingdom and spread the seeds of greed and ambition. So corrupted, humanity lost its potential to grow beyond the triple-tiered realm of Heaven, Earth, and Hell. It would forever be beholden to the whims of the gods and goddesses. Nevertheless, human beings remained tenacious and despite the darkness harbored in their souls they did the best they could to live in peace with one another.

That peace was not lasting, unfortunately. Unable to resist their insatiable temptations, the people of the Central Plains went to war. Their heroes sought to collect the five Empyrean Stones in order to raise an army of the dead to fight on their behalf. Although the stones were never reunited, the war was still horrifying in all of its myriad aspects. Everyone, including the Baiyun, suffered terribly as result.



Mei, appearing to the Baiyun leaders disguised in glammers designed to make her seem kindly and wise, convinced them their defeat at the hands of the Central Plains tribes was because they had forsaken Chi You so many years ago. In truth, she told them, Chi You had been a just and kind god who was no longer able to abide the corruption of Heaven and thus his apparent rebellion. The Baiyun, feeling deeply ashamed of their ancestors' "betrayal", once again took to worshipping Chi You as their God of War. Meanwhile, the Beastman tribes, a race that had the appearance of being half man and half beast, moved north toward Mount Kunlun to get away from the rampant persecution of their kind in the Central Plains.

In the centuries since, many a kingdom has risen and fallen. The five Empyrean Stones passed through hands too numerous to count. No one ever succeeded in reuniting all of the stones, and after the war with the Central Plains, no one really tried again.

That is until now.

With the new Qin threat to East Baiyue, the young chieftain Lan Wei has finally decided to seek out the Empyrean Stones and bring them together once again. By tapping into their power she hopes to resurrect her father, the only one, she believes, capable of leading the Baiyun to victory against their hated enemies.



1.3 Leading Character

Lan Wei, the daughter of Lan Xiong, the Chieftain of East Baiyue, is the leading character in the game. She is 18 years old, beautiful, but with outstanding martial arts ability.

Whilst Lan Wei is at the start of the game a playful and quite mischievous young girl, she has to grow up very fast when her father and Chi Huan, the Chief Wizard, die in mysterious circumstances one after the other.

As Lan Wei begins her dangerous adventure into the Central Plains to find the Empyrean Stones she is aided by her boyfriend Yan Hong and a loyal Beastman friend called Liang Hu.



2. GAME FEATURES

Blending Chinese Legend and History

Seal of Evil is an ARPG (Action Role Playing Game) set in the last years of the Warring States Period in China's history, some 2, 200 years ago. Seal of Evil blends mysterious ancient legends and breathtaking wars in which players will enjoy an exciting adventure, have the opportunity to see various sacred items, fight against numerous monsters and meet many famous historical figures. In the whirlpool of love and hatred, players will struggle shoulder by shoulder with their loyal friends. There are many mysteries in the game that need to be explored by players. Why did the people from the Central Plains and the Baiyue people hate each other? What was the story about the mysterious Beastman tribe? What was the war between the gods in ancient times like? Why did the Chieftain of East Baiyue, Lan Xiong, and the Chief Wizard, Chi Huan, die in mysterious circumstances one after the other?

Five Elements Concept

Ancient Chinese philosophers believed that the whole world was made up by five basic elements, Metal, Wood, Water, Fire and Earth. There is a kind of complicated interactional relationship amongst the five elements: Metal promotes Water, Water promotes Wood, Wood promotes Fire, Fire promotes Earth and Earth promotes Metal; Metal restricts Wood, Wood restricts Earth, Earth restricts Water, Water restricts Fire and Fire restricts Metal. The theory of the five elements



reflected the traditional knowledge of ancient Chinese people towards the world and vividly described what it was thought constituted the world and how the world worked. The Five-element philosophy is applied throughout the whole game, e.g. character's attributes, skills, equipment, Item Creation and puzzles. Making good use of the Five-element philosophy can achieve pleasantly surprising results and make the game more interesting.

Refined Graphics

Seal of Evil relies upon Object Software's newly developed GFX3D engine, which blends 2D and 3D imaging techniques to deliver stunning in-game graphics. There are hundreds of fully rendered regions to explore, such as the idyllic and often mysterious villages of East Baiyue, the magnificent and dangerous cities of the Central Plains, ancient palaces, cloud-capped mountains, and other locales too numerous to name. Each environment is unique and rich in detail. The 3D rendering engine's special effects capabilities further enhance them, allowing players to take full advantage of their computer hardware's graphic potential.

Numerous Items

SOE creates for the five hero types more than eighty series of equipment according to their different features including weapons, armor and helmets, etc. Making good use of the Five-element system can activate equipment's hidden attributes. The activated equipment can also be improved through fighting and killing. Developing equipment will bring players more fun because its attributes can be improved as the game develops. There are some sets of equipment that can greatly increase a hero's ability.



Advanced Item Creation

Seal of Evil introduces an advanced item creation system that allows players to make equipment using a wide variety of methods. Each one relies on different materials and elemental attributes, and may be learned through persistent exploration and investigation. Raw materials for item creation can be harvested or found in the wild, bought and traded from merchants or commoners, or taken from enemies slain in combat. A character's equipment can be upgraded by means of the item creation system as well. This grants enhanced abilities, bonuses, protection, and spell casting above and beyond the gear's innate attributes. Other items, such as medicines and cut gems, can also be created.

Balanced Skill System

Skills add an entirely new dimension to combat and adventuring. The five heroes each have unique skills that apply strictly to their chosen professions. In addition to normal skill advancement through the accumulation of experience, skills can be improved with elemental attributes or with enhanced weapons and equipment. There are many ways to learn new skills in Seal of Evil, such as by finding a rare scroll in a secret cave, or from the unassuming old man in the street who is in truth a master of kung fu.

Teamwork

SOE adopts a Real Time Strategy mode in fighting. Players will control a small party of characters to fight against enemies. A specially designed monster AI system makes the gameplay more interesting. Some skills such as suicide bombing and curses demand high skill in character manipulation. Moreover, attacking an enemy from the rear



will cause more damage than attacking an enemy from the front. Thus it will be worth spending some time to consider tactics before fighting. Party members, choice of skills, combinations of equipment and teamwork among heroes will play important roles in battles.

Multiple Endings

The Seal of Evil story has multiple possible endings. The one the players discover is determined by their choices and actions while performing certain quests. Conversations with NPCs (non-player characters) also have an effect on the outcome; different conversations can tip the balance from one ending to another. To assist the players along the way, the game system generates a Quest and Travel log to record significant events and conversations. Performing all available quests can potentially lengthen game play by as much as 30%.



3. RUNNING ENVIRONMENT

3.1 Minimum

In order to run Seal of Evil, your computer should meet the minimum requirements as below:

PII 300 or equivalent

128MB RAM

4X CD ROM

800x600x16bit 4MB RAM Video Card, Supports 3D Hardware Acceleration

Sound Blaster compatible

1G Disk Space

Keyboard

Mouse

DirectX 8.1 or above

Windows 98, Window 2000, Windows XP

3.2 Recommended

In order to run Seal of Evil smoothly, your computer should meet the recommended requirements as below:



PIII 500 or equivalent
256MB RAM
4X CD ROM
800x600x16bit 16MB RAM Video Card, Supports 3D Hardware
Acceleration
Sound Blaster compatible
2G Disk Space
Keyboard
Mouse
DirectX 8.1 or above
Windows 98, Window 2000, Windows XP

Note: You can analyze your computer by clicking on the “Scan” button on the installation interface. A few minutes later, the system will tell you whether your computer meets the running requirements demanded by SOE.



4. INSTALL AND UNINSTALL

4.1 How to install

You can install Seal of Evil by either of the two means below:

Insert the SOE Disc A into the CD-ROM drive. If you haven't installed SOE before and the AutoRun function is activated, the installation will run automatically. You can select Install to proceed according to the instructions. At the end of the installation, you may be asked to install DirectX 8.1 (or above) and/or a media player software.

If the AutoRun function is disabled, you can find the setup.exe file manually. Double-click the file and proceed according to the instructions. At the end of the installation, you may be asked to install DirectX 8.1 (or above) and/or a media player software.

After installation, you can click on the "Start" button on the installation interface to start a new game. Alternatively, you can click on the "Start" button on the Windows interface to find SOE and run the game.



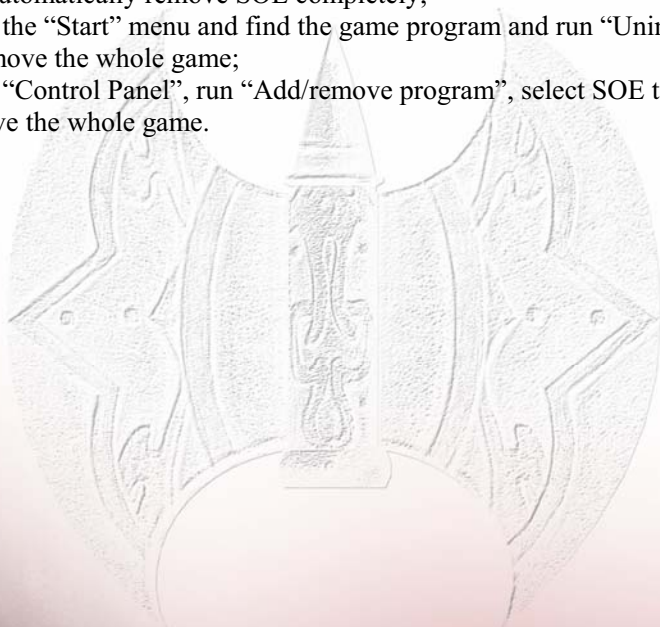
4.2 Uninstall

You can uninstall SOE by one means out of the three following:

Select the “Uninstall” button on the Installation interface, the system will automatically remove SOE completely;

Open the “Start” menu and find the game program and run “Uninstall” to remove the whole game;

Open “Control Panel”, run “Add/remove program”, select SOE to remove the whole game.



5. MAIN MENU

After an open scene (press ESC to skip), you will see the main menu where you can start a new game, change game options, view credits, end a game or return to Windows.



5.1 Getting Started

New Game

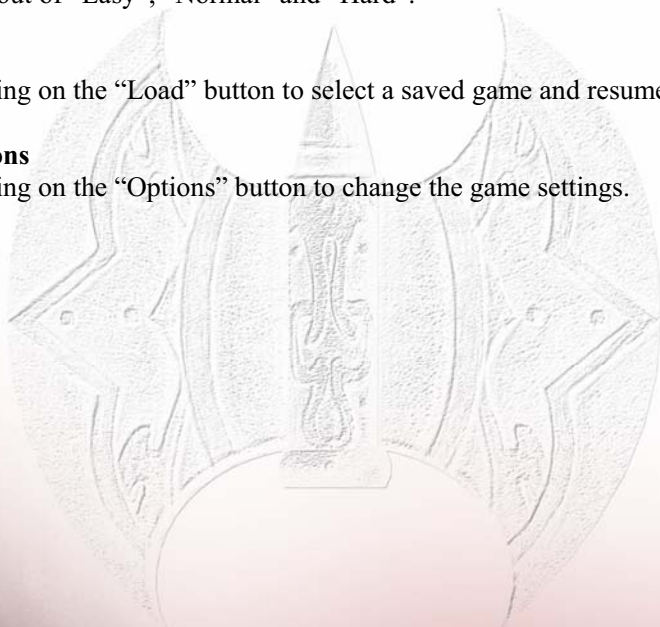
After clicking on the “New Game” button, you can select a difficulty level out of “Easy”, “Normal” and “Hard”.

Load

Clicking on the “Load” button to select a saved game and resume.

Options

Clicking on the “Options” button to change the game settings.



5.2 Options

5.2.1 Game Settings



Game settings are divided into three parts: Display, Sound and Game Controls.

Display

Resolution: 800×600 and 1024×768.

Transparency: Players will see the characters who are behind a building when this function is activated.



Light/Shadow: The game will display in the dynamic light/shadow mode when the function is activated; the game will display in the static light/shadow mode when the function is disabled.

Lightness: The lightness of the game graphics can be adjusted here to suit different monitors.

Contrast: The contrast can be adjusted here to suit different monitors.

Sound

Music: To adjust the music volume.

Sound Effect: To adjust the sound effect volume.

Game Controls

Pause when HP is low: The game will pause automatically when the HP of any character is low. This function can give players enough time to heal their characters.

Follow: Party members will automatically follow their leader when this function is activated.

Difficulty Level

The difficulty level players choose will be displayed here.

Note: Players can restore the default settings by clicking on the “Default” button.

5.2.2 Help





SOE provides a convenient in-game help system from which players can get a lot of useful information. The Help information is divided into 3 parts: Basics, Controls and Item Creation. Click on the relevant button and then players can view the information they want.

5.3 Credits

View the credits of Seal of Evil. For detailed information, also see “[12 CREDITS](#)”.



5.4 Exit

Click on the “Exit” button to leave the game.



6. HOW TO PLAY

6.1 Control Panel

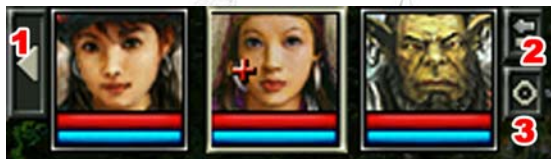


1. Open/Close [System Menu](#).
2. Open/Close [Character](#) interface.
3. Open/Close [Item](#) interface.
4. Open/Close [Skill](#) interface.
5. Open/Close Map.
6. Open/Close Quest/Log interface.
7. The default left-handed skill of the current character. Click on the button to bring about the list of all the left-handed skills for player's choice.
8. The hotkey inventory of the current character. Medicine and equipment can be put into the inventory.
9. The default right-handed skill of the current character. Click on the button to bring about the list of all the right-handed skills for player's choice.
10. HP of the current character.
11. MP of the current character.



Note: Almost all the buttons on the control panel have their own hotkeys. For more details, please see [11 CONTROL](#).

6.2 Party Control



1. Open/Close Party Control Panel.
2. Open/Close Fight Control Panel.
3. Select all.

There will be at most 5 members in a party and 3 members in a fight team at one time. Players can adjust the fight team during the break time through the Party Control Panel.

When a member's HP decreases to 0, the member is regarded as being in a seriously wounded state and will leave the battle. In villages and/or inns of towns, doctors will heal wounded members. But the HP of the member won't recover completely and further medical treatment is still needed.

Character Portrait can display the character's health condition, such as: being poisoned or frozen.

When there are free attribute points, a "+" mark will appear on the character's portrait.



6.3 System Menu Interface

Click on the System Menu button or press the “ESC” key, the System Menu will pop up through which players can save and load a game, change game settings, view Help, resume or end a game.










6.4 Move, Talk and Fight

Select a character, then left-click the destination and the character will find his/her way to there. Hold the left button of the mouse, move the cursor and the character will follow the pointer.

Place the pointer upon a person and it becomes a bubble with a number of suspension points. At that time, you can talk to the person by left-clicking.

Place the pointer upon a person and it becomes a sword shape. At that time, you and the person are in a hostile state.

6.5 Pointer

Pointer	Description
	Normal
	Gateway
	Talk
	View
	Doors or chests (A key is required.)
	Forbidden
	Hostile



	Grasp
--	-------

6.6 Pause



Players can pause the game during a battle to organize their fight team by pressing the Space button or clicking on the Pause button on the Control Panel.

When players pause the game, a Sandglass will appear in the upper left corner of the screen.

6.7 Obtain Items

There are 5 means to get items.

In battle. Some items will drop out of enemies you have just killed.

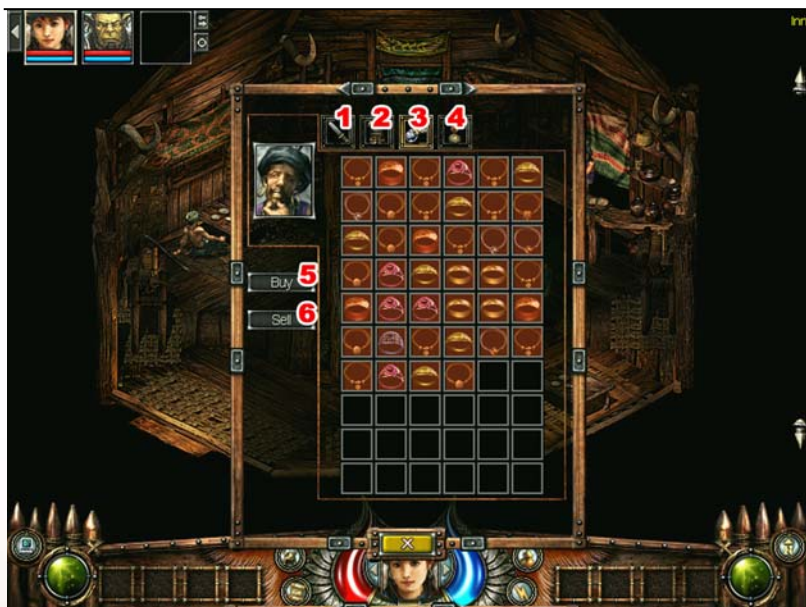
By searching. Players may see some chests, a pile of firewood and etc. in the wilderness. Some chests may need assassins' skill to open.

By Item Creation. Create items through the [Item Creation](#) system.

Complete quests. Players may get some items as rewards after they complete some quests.

By trade. Buy some items from certain persons. The trade interface is as follows:





1. Weapons
2. Armor
3. Decorations
4. Medicine
5. Buy
6. Sell



6.8 Use Skills

Different heroes have their unique skills. Almost all the skills are used through clicking on the left and right button of the mouse. However, some skills such as Item Creation are used through the skill interface.

Players can set left and right-handed skills for each hero. Clicking on the left or right button to use the default left or right-handed skill.

Note: When coming across enemies, heroes will automatically attack with their default left-handed skills. Therefore, it's recommended to set the most commonly-used skill as the default left-handed skill.

6.9 Quests and Log

This interface enables players to record and view their experiences in their adventure. Click on the Quest button on the Control Panel or press the L key to open the Quest and Log interface.

Quest interface:





On the Quest interface, unfinished and finished quests are listed.

Log interface:





The Log will record for players their adventure experiences, including the people players have met and players' feelings. In the log important information will be highlighted in color.

Players can view the chapter information from this function.



6.10 Map



Press the TAB button to open the map. Green boxes stand for gateways; Blue blocks stand for party members; Yellow blocks stand for NPCs; Red blocks stand for enemies.



6.11 Save and Load

Click on the System Menu button or press the ESC button to produce the [System Menu](#) interface. Click the Save button to open the relevant interface to save games.

Choose a place first and then click on the OK button or double-click on a place to save the game.



The following information will be recorded: screenshot, location, main character's level, game date and system date.



For Quick-Save, please see [6.12](#).

Note: The total size of the saved games will expand gradually. If players have just got a relatively small disk space, errors may occur. In this circumstance, players should remove some of the saved games by clicking on the Remove button.

Click on the System Menu button or press the ESC key to bring about [System Menu](#). Click on the Load button to open the relevant interface to load a game.

Choose a saved game and click on the Load button or double-click on a saved game to resume the game.



Note: When players try to load a game from the Main Menu, the system will display the page with the latest saved game on it; when players try to load a game from the System Menu, the system will display the page with the last saved game on it.

6.12 Quick-Save

Besides the above way to save a game, the system also provides a Quick-Save function. This way unexpected losses during players' adventures will be reduced to a minimum.

With the Quick-Save function, players needn't open the Save interface. Instead, players can just press F11. Since there is only one place for Quick-Save, the latest saved game will always replace the previous one. Moreover, F12 is for a player to quickly load the Quick-Save game.



7. CHARACTERS

7.1 Heroes

Over the course of Seal of Evil, a player can recruit up to four different heroic characters into his or her party. The main heroes are: Lan Wei, the witch; Yan Hong, the wizard; Liang Hu, the Beastman warrior; Gai Nie, the paladin; and Cai Xin, the assassin. As the adventure progresses, heroes might offer suggestions and opinions or even dissent against one another if the player-controlled character takes a course of action with which they disagree. Although each individual hero has his or her own strengths and weaknesses, in a full group these tend to all balance out.

7.1.1 Lan Wei



Lan Wei

Age: 18

Race: Human

Class: Witch

Fealty: East Baiyue

Home: Cloudrose Village

Strengths: Reliable and Kind

Weaknesses: Unruly



The daughter of the East Baiyue chieftain, Lan Wei is a young witch-in-training. Although she only recently turned 18, she still chaffs under her father's strict parenting. To his credit, he only wants what is best for her, which is to be prepared for anything on the day she must take up his mantle of authority and lead their people. Her mother is no longer with her. She died years ago during a Qin invasion defending both her husband and Lan Wei's brother, who also died on that day. Unlike other Baiyun, Lan Wei really doesn't bear any malice against the Qin people of the Central Plains region. Having grown up during a time of post-war calm and peace, she never experienced first hand the full impact of the repeated invasion attempts.

Lan Wei's capricious personality often gets her into trouble, especially with her close friends. For example, one of the older boys in the village, Ah Wa, often volunteers to be her guinea pig whenever she wants to practice her magic, a responsibility he claims to assume in order to spare anyone else the unfortunate side-effects of her still inexperienced mystical talents. Her best friend in the world is a Beastman named Liang Hu, who was adopted into the Cloudrose community when he showed up out of the blue more than 12 years ago. Then there is Yan Hong, her brooding, somewhat moody boyfriend. They've been a couple for as long as anyone can remember. The entire village won't be surprised in the least when she and he decide to finally marry. The fact that they haven't yet continues to be a source of both amusement and wonder to them.

Despite her youth, Lan Wei does indeed exhibit her father's temperament and even some of his wisdom. She is also a remarkable talent when it comes to casting spells and manipulating the Five Elements. Her teacher, the village's Chief Wizard, Chi Huan, believes the girl possesses the strength of her ancestors. Someone with Lan Wei's potential only comes along once in a very long while. A destiny of greatness awaits her.



7.1.2 Yan Hong



Yan Hong
 Age: 24
 Race: Human
 Class: Wizard
 Fealty: West Baiyue
 Home: Cloudrose Village
 Strengths: Persevering and Intelligent
 Weaknesses: Arrogant

Yan Hong is not the happiest fellow around. That's understandable, though, given that he's one of the last surviving people of the now-extinct West Baiyue. His father, Yan Bo, was the West Baiyun chieftain during the Qin invasions and, sadly, died defending his country. Before Yan Hong could fall victim to a Qin blade, his uncle Yan Peng rescued him at the last second. For years they journeyed together, his uncle always on the lookout for new magic and artifacts. Naturally Yan Hong picked up a few things here and there. It was inevitable that he'd become a wizard as well when he came of age. His main talent lies in the mystical summoning of wild creatures, beasts, and the occasional demon (although his adopted master Lan Xiong frowns on that).

As already mentioned, Yan Hong is generally dour and unhappy. He seems constantly disappointed with his life, as well as the world around him. The one thing that brings him true happiness is Lan Wei, the love of his life. Although he will never say it aloud, he sometimes thinks Fate destroyed his country solely to bring the two of them together, perhaps for even some greater purpose. He knows it's wrong to think such a horrible thought, but nothing else in this world matters as much to him as Lan Wei. Luckily, her father, as strict as he is, long accepted Yan Hong's place in his daughter's life (though not without



copious complaints). He is friends with Liang Hu, albeit begrudgingly. While he has nothing against him because of his Beastman heritage, he finds the other man's eternal optimism incredibly tedious and annoying. When he's not with Lan Wei, Yan Hong values his privacy above all else. Spending his childhood alone with his uncle on the road taught him the virtue of looking inward for comfort and solace.

7.1.3 Liang Hu



Liang Hu
Age: 26
Race: Beastman
Class: Warrior
Fealty: East Baiyue
Home: Fang-Horn Village
Strengths: Loyal and Honest
Weaknesses: Emulous

Liang Hu (or “Stalwart Tiger”) is not exactly the sharpest tool in the shed. However, what he lacks in wit or intelligence he more than makes up for in heart and soul. Originally hailing from the largest Beastman settlement in the region, Fang-Horn, he ran away in shame when he was younger after losing a bet to his best friend, Tie Lang (or “Iron Wolf”). He wandered the Central Plains for many years, experiencing first-hand the racism and fear that has been directed at his people for so long by humanity. Yet, despite all the social hardships he encountered, he never lost his faith in people (Beastman and human alike). To earn money and provisions, he often fought in the gladiatorial pits that are so popular in the Central Plains cities. His impressive record eventually attracted the attention of a notoriously corrupt magistrate who tried to coerce Liang Hu into throwing his



matches (thus rigging the fight and giving the magistrate the advantage with the bookies.) When Liang Hu refused to tarnish his honor with such cowardly tactics, the magistrate threatened to put him in prison for the rest of his natural life. Wisely, Liang Hu fled the Central Plains and eventually found himself in Cloudrose, where both the chieftain and his people accepted the Beastman for what he was. He has been in the Baiyun village ever since.

His best friend is Lan Wei, the chieftain's daughter. Her father took it upon himself to further educate Liang Hu in the arts of war and battle (while Lan Wei was studying under the village's Chief Wizard, Chi Huan). Liang Hu regards Lan Wei as his sister in all but blood. There is nothing he won't do for her, and should trouble threaten her he will sacrifice his own life if it means saving her. Yan Hong doesn't much impress him, although he doesn't really dislike him either. Generally, he thinks the young Wizard is entirely too dour for his own good.

7.1.4 Cai Xin



Cai Xin
Age: 22
Race: Human
Class: Assassin
Fealty: Central Plains
Home: Giant Keep
Strengths: Optimistic and Unbiased
Weaknesses: Naive

Cai Xin was born in the border village of Giant Keep, which has always been renown for the contingent of imprisoned giants buried in the mountain side nearby. Her father, Huan Qi, was a Qin soldier wounded when he and his unit were ambushed by Hun raiders. Her



mother, Cai Lian, was a skilled hunter in her own right and found Huan Qi lying half-dead in the river reeds while hunting deer. They fell deeply in love and married not long after he made a full recovery. The union, however, was forbidden by the village elders of Giant Keep. Huan Qi was exiled, and Cai Lian did her best to raise Cai Xin on her own. She died a few years later from a wasting sickness and Cai Xin was adopted by her aunt.

Cai Xin had a hard life growing up. The Baiyun of Giant Keep made their distaste for her Qin heritage apparent every chance they got. As a child, the village bullies constantly picked on her. Nevertheless, she managed to keep her chin and spirits up. With the encouragement of her aunt, she secretly studied martial arts with which to defend herself. While the villagers were distrustful of her because of her parents and often refused her even the simplest of courtesies, she formed easy friendships with merchants who often visited from the Central Plains in order to sell their wares to the Baiyun. One such friend was Gao Suo, ostensibly a merchant from Chengdu City but in truth a mercenary spy who sold secrets between the villages to the highest bidder. He and Cai Xin became quite close and he eventually taught her more subtle uses for her considerable martial prowess. It was through him she learned the assassin's trade. A few years ago, he went off by himself to find the mythical land of Xi Zhang, leaving Cai Xin to her own devices. During his short stay at the village, he was the closest thing to a father she had ever had.

Cai Xin yearns to see the world and, more importantly, to find her real father.



7.1.5 Gai Nie



Gai Nie
 Age: 35
 Race: Human
 Class: Paladin
 Fealty: None
 Home: Yuci
 Strengths: Dispassionate and Wise
 Weaknesses: Jaded

Wherever Gai Nie goes, his reputation precedes him like a wild fire on a grass plain. He is a veteran of many wars, and is one of the few true heroes in China during this troubled time. His career began in the state of Zhao, following the famous general Li Mu into battle after battle against the Qin rebels. Li Mu, one of the greatest warriors who ever lived, was a righteous man with an indomitable will. He rarely took on students because so few men and women could live up to his high moral standards. However, one day a private named Gai Nie caught his eye. The young man, while defending a cohort of camp followers from ruthless bandits, exhibited such skill and finesse with his weapon that he greatly impressed the general. Over the following weeks, Li Mu slyly tested Gai Nie's moral character. Immensely satisfied by the young man, he promoted him and began teaching him in earnest. Months passed and the war against the Qin raged all across the land. Then one day the King of Zhao, believing rumors that Li Mu was secretly allied with the King of Qin, ordered the general to commit ritual suicide. Ever loyal, the general did so without question. Shortly thereafter, the Qin army broke the Zhao defenses. All was lost. Gai Nie, despite his best efforts to rally the soldiers, had no choice but to ride back to camp and save his wife. Together they fled to safety. Saddened by the loss of his mentor and sickened by war, Gai Nie



decided to retire his sword. He and his wife moved from place to place, avoiding the bounty hunters and Qin patrols who eagerly sought his head. He was content to live a simple life. Everything changed for the worse, however, on the day his friend Jing Ke's letter found him. Now, with his wife and baby dead, Gai Nie has again taken up his sword against the despotic Qin leader, King Ying Zheng and his wicked armies.

Gai Nie will have his revenge.

7.2 Character's Attributes

7.2.1 Basic Attributes

The main characters have their own Five-element attributes. After one of the Five-element attributes has been enhanced, some secondary attributes will also be enhanced besides Attack and Defense Power.

Five-element Attributes	Secondary Attributes
Metal	Increases Attacks and the power of attack skills.
Wood	Increases HP and HP recovery speed.
Water	Increases MP, MP recovery speed and the power of secondary skills.
Fire	Increases strike and dodge rates.
Earth	Increases defense.

Therefore, only allocating the limited attribute points according to the features of each class can achieve the best effect.



A character's attribute is determined by the highest-rated Five-element attribute. If two or more attributes are the same, the system will choose the attribute rating in the following order: Metal, Wood, Water, Fire and Earth.

7.2.2 Attribute Interface



Notes:

The right side shows the basic information of the character.

Below are the Five-element attributes.

A “+” mark shows under each attribute. If there are free attribute



points, players can click on the “+” button to allocate the points.

7.2.3 Character Attribute Upgrade

After players obtain a certain amount of experience, they will get leveled up. Each level-up will award players 5 free attribute points.

There are two ways to allocate the points:

Press the C key to open the Attribute interface.

There will be a Notice at the bottom of the screen when a character gets leveled up. Click on the small ball before the Notice, the Attribute interface will pop up.



Click on the “+” button under a certain attribute once, 1 attribute point will be allocated on the attribute. Hold the left button of the mouse, attribute points will be allocated to the attribute continuously.

7.3 Enemy

7.3.1 Enemy's Attribute

Enemies in the game have random Five-element attributes. By choosing the corresponding attack and defense according to enemies' attributes, players will win the battle more easily.



Five-element attributes' effect on your enemy's defense

Your enemy's Five-element Attributes have effects on their Defense against Five-element attacks. So you can employ the skills, weapons and equipment which will restrict your enemy to achieve more victories (see also Appendix II "The Concept of the Five Elements").

For example, when confronted by an enemy of "Water" type, you should be aware that the skills and weapons of "Fire" will have least power or even no power against your enemy (so your enemy's HP will decrease very slowly or won't reduce at all even though you are attacking him.) However, if you employ the skills and weapons of "Earth", you will maximize the power.

Five-element attributes' effect on your enemy's attack

Similarly, your enemy's Five-element Attributes have impact on their Five-element Attacks. You can employ the relevant protection equipment according to your enemy's Five-element Attributes. This way you will minimize the damage you may suffer.

For example: An enemy of "Water" will attach some special "Water" effects onto their attacks and cause larger casualties to your heroes who are low in Defense against "Water" attacks. But if you can equip those heroes with protection equipment of "Earth" which restricts "Water" (see Appendix II "The Concept of the Five Elements"), you will achieve the best outcome in defense.

How to Judge your enemy's Five-element attribute





When you put the cursor onto a character, his or her name and HP will appear above on the screen (a non-fighting NPC has no HP and cannot be attacked). The character's Five-element Attribute will be displayed in some icons following his or her name if he or she has any.



As shown in the above picture:

1. A character's name.
2. The character's Five-element Attribute.
3. The character's HP.

7.3.2 Enemies

In the game, players will meet various enemies. After they kill enemies, players will obtain experience and items randomly, such as snake teeth, Sod Fiend barks, mantrap petal, Gourd of Soul-Draining and iridescent stone.

Enemies are created randomly. In other words, the same kind of enemies may use different skills and attack in different ways. Choosing the corresponding skills and strategies, players will win the battle more easily.



Below are some enemies players may fight against in the game.



Sod Fiend

It was said that after Chi You was defeated, his anger became an air of resentment over the mantrap woods. Some plants which had absorbed a lot of spirit of the earth in the woods attached upon dead animals' corpses. They both blended together and finally became this kind of half-plant-half-animal creature. Since these creatures drained a lot of resentment spirit, they were pugnacious and will



	<p>attack anything which moves close to them.</p>
	<p>Kong Wei This was a kind of fish living in the mountains. It was said that in ancient times, the world was in a state of chaos. These strange fish led the water of the East Sea to Baiyue. The God of War couldn't stand seeing that his people were submerged under water. So he used earth to stop the water. After the flood receded, a small amount of fish were left there and got used to the local environment. Afterwards their offspring gradually learned how to fly.</p>
	<p>Snake King There was a Snake King living in the cave for more than one thousand years. It was huge and as tall as a house. It fed on fresh blood everyday. If there was no fresh blood, it would eat small snakes. Thus, its meat was one of the best ingredients for medicine.</p>



Shadow Crab

It was said that in ancient times, after the flood and fire were squelched, the God of Fire concealed the power of fire beneath the earth. All underground creatures except Shadow Crabs were extinct. They gradually learned how to become invisible. Their bodies could not stand the extremely high temperature of lava so that they could only wander beside lava. They would attack all other creatures close to them.





Guardian

According to the ancient classics, there also existed a kind of dexterous monster with a tall and thin build that walked like a human being and its body was covered with scales. Their weapons were very strange. It was said that before the Emperor Yan devoted the rest of his life to making medicine, he had persuaded the monster into following the Yellow Emperor. During the period when the Yellow Emperor established the country, it helped him very much. After the death of the Yellow Emperor, no one saw it again.





Double-Headed Creature

In the far north where it was extremely cold and everything was covered with thick snow and ice, there were some huge double-headed monsters. Those huge ancient monsters had incredible strength and their paws could smash an ice hill as if it was a mound of earth. They fed on earth and stones.

Although they had two heads, they were dim-witted. They would attack anyone within their range. The Yellow Emperor requested God to give those huge monsters four eyes. No one knew why. But there must be some reasons.





Fire Demon

It was said that Zhu Rong and Gong Gong were both the descendants of the Farming God. During the first war between them, Zhu Rong achieved complete victory, but Gong Gong made Buzhou Mountain furious and that caused a disastrous flood in the human world. In order to stop the water, Zhu Rong sent his fire dragon to swim in the human world. One of the branches of the fire dragon's descendants was the Flare Monster. Since the flood was caused by common water, Zhu Rong took away the Holy Fire from his fire dragon. Thus the Fire Demon couldn't use the Holy Fire. But it's still very hard for human beings to defeat it.

7.4 NPCs

In the game, players will meet many NPCs (non-player characters). By talking with them, players will obtain a lot of useful information which may influence the development of the game, trigger some hidden plots and award players with some valuable treasure.



Below are some NPCs players may meet in the game.



Lan Xiong, the Chieftain
He is Lan Wei's father and the Chieftain of East Baiyue. He is very strict with Lan Wei. He loves his daughter very much.






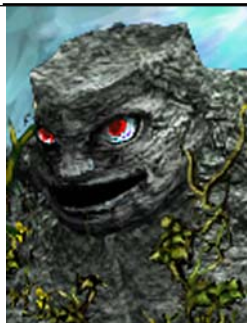
Chi Huan, the Chief Wizard
Chi Huan always takes care of Lan Wei. He knows Lan Wei's personality very well. He always steps in to help Lan Wei manage the chaotic situations she causes.



Yin Cheng, the merchant
He is amiable and is the only one in the elder generation who can talk about some personal matters with Lan Wei. He always travels widely to do his business so that he knows a lot. He always brings some gifts for Lan Wei.



	<p>Yan Peng He is Yan Hong's uncle. He was sentenced to death because he had learned Black Summoning Magic which violated the rules of the tribe. But Yan Bo, the Chieftain of the tribe, let him go. Before Qin troops defeated West Baiyue, he saved the Chieftain's only son, Yan Hong. Afterwards he left Yan Hong under Lan Xiong's care and then continued his life of wandering around the world.</p>
	<p>Tie Lang (Iron Wolf) He is Liang Hu's friend. He was regarded as the most powerful warrior of the Beastman race. But he was too proud so he finally didn't become the Chieftain of the Beastman race.</p>
	<p>Gobbler It is a demon with a big mouth, belly and stomach. It makes use of a strange way to collect energy to suffice itself.</p>



Stone Creature

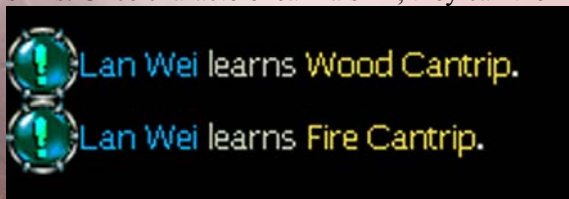
It is a human-like creature. Once people touch its body, the person will become a stone.

8. SKILLS

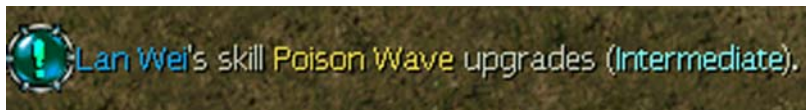
8.1 The Skill System

8.1.1 How to learn and upgrade skills

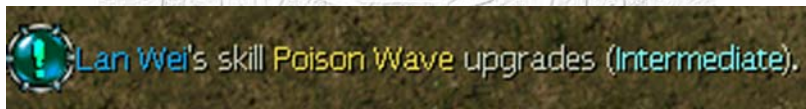
By wandering the game world and completing quests, characters can learn many skills. There is no level requirement for characters to learn skills. Once characters learn a skill, they can then use it.



In the game, players will find many skill scrolls if they search carefully. These scrolls can upgrade skills. Give scrolls to the suitable characters and then right-click the scrolls to upgrade the relevant skills.



After completing some quests, players will also get skills upgraded. In the meantime, players may obtain some new skill effects.



8.1.2 Skill and skill description interface



Click on the Skill button or press “V” to open the interface as below. Click on the buttons at the top of the interface, players can switch between Fight Skills and Item Creation Skills.

On the skill interface, players can view the skills they have learned and the skill level. Click on the skill icon, the description about the skill will pop up.

In the skill description, you can view all the current effects the skill has.



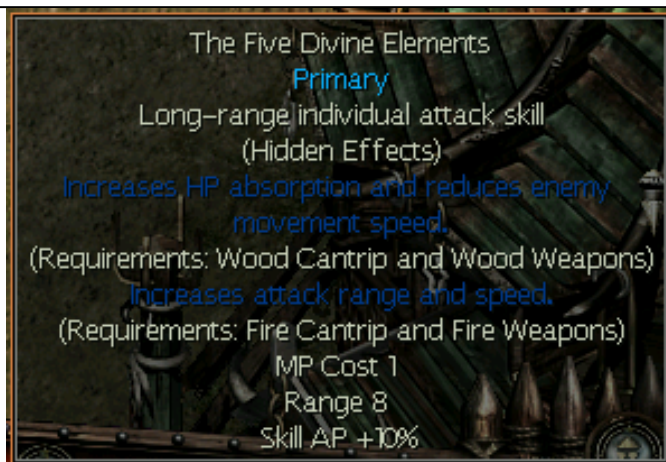


8.1.3 Skill effects

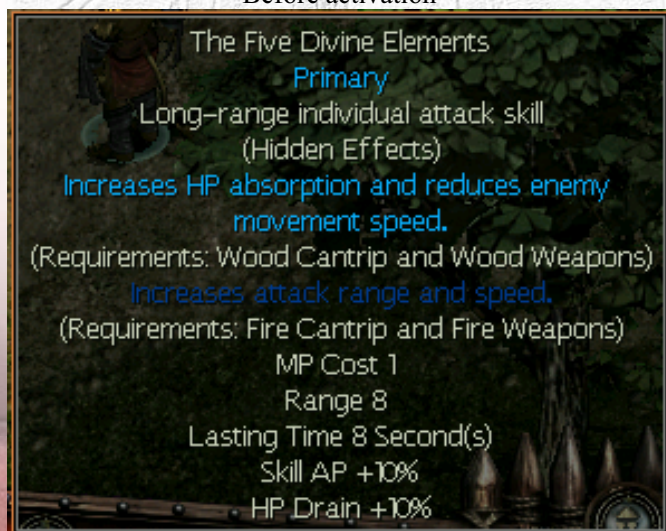
In the game, skill attributes will vary as players allocate attribute points, choose weapons and combine skills.

Many of the skills in the game have hidden effects which can take effect under some conditions. Take The Five Divine Elements, a Witch's skill, for example. It has the hidden effects of Draining HP and Slow Down, but the two effects will be available only when players use Wood weapons and Wood Cantrip.





Before activation



After activation



The allocation of attribute points will also influence skill effects. Players can view all the current effects the skill has from the skill description interface.

8.2 Skill Descriptions

8.2.1 Witch's skills

	<p>Stick Strike:</p> <p>Effect: basic close-quarters attack skill.</p>
	<p>The Five Divine Elements:</p> <p>Effect: basic long-range attack skill. Different weapons result in different effects.</p>
	<p>Poison Wave:</p> <p>Effect: Wood-based group attack skill. Attacks multiple enemies.</p>
	<p>Chocking Thorns:</p> <p>Effect: Wood-based area attack skill. Attacks multiple enemies.</p>
	<p>Insect Swarm:</p> <p>Effect: Wood-based attack skill. Causes great damage to an individual enemy.</p>



	<p>Fire Dragon:</p> <p>Effect: Fire-based area attack skill. Attacks multiple enemies.</p>
	<p>Heaven's Fire:</p> <p>Effect: Fire-based attack skill. Attacks all the enemies around you.</p>
	<p>Inferno:</p> <p>Effect: Advanced fire-based group attack skill. Attacks multiple enemies.</p>
	<p>Wood Cantrip:</p> <p>Effect: Increases your own attack and HP recovery for a specific duration. Increases the power of wood-based attack skills.</p>
	<p>Fire Cantrip:</p> <p>Effect: Increases your own attack and movement speed for a specific duration. Increases the power of fire-based attack skills.</p>
	<p>Ten-Thousand Death-Encumbered Demons:</p> <p>Effect: Reduces the power of enemies in a certain area.</p>
	<p>Red Bird:</p> <p>Effect: Witch's Martial Skill. Causes deadly damage to all the enemies in a certain area. Available only after Anger is at maximum.</p>





8.2.2 Beastman's skills

	<p>Mantis Strike:</p> <p>Effect: Basic close-quarters attack skill.</p>
	<p>Peace of the Earth:</p> <p>Effect: Counteracts The Flow of Life, Power of the Earth and Unleash Monkey's Spirit.</p>
	<p>Tiger Claw:</p> <p>Effect: Attacks many enemies in front of you.</p>
	<p>Berserk:</p> <p>Effect: Attacks a row of enemies.</p>
	<p>Setting the Plains Afire:</p> <p>Effect: Exerts all strength on one strike. Causes great damage to an individual enemy.</p>
	<p>Throw Stone:</p> <p>Effect: Long-range attack. Attacks an individual enemy.</p>







	<p>Explode:</p> <p>Effect: Attacks all the enemies around you.</p>
	<p>Quake in Heaven:</p> <p>Effect: Attacks the enemies in front of you and reduces their attack power.</p>
	<p>The Flow of Life:</p> <p>Effect: Increases your own HP recovery and defense for a specific duration.</p>
	<p>Power of the Earth:</p> <p>Effect: Increases your own attack and the power of your long-range attack skills for a specific duration. Cannot move for the duration</p>
	<p>Unleash Monkey's Spirit:</p> <p>Effect: Increases speed and attack for a specific duration. Gradual loss of HP for the duration.</p>
	<p>Untame the White Tiger:</p> <p>Effect: Beastman's Martial Skill. Greatly increases attack and movement speed for a specific duration. Available only when Anger is at maximum.</p>



8.2.3 Wizard's skills

	<p>Divine Retribution:</p> <p>Effect: Basic long-range attack skill.</p>
	<p>Summon Sod Fiend:</p> <p>Effect: Summons Sod Fiends to fight for you.</p>
	<p>Summon Kong Wei:</p> <p>Effect: Summons Kong Wei to fight for you.</p>
	<p>Summon Fox:</p> <p>Effect: Summons Foxes to fight for you.</p>
	<p>Summon Tree Spirit:</p> <p>Effect: Summons Tree Spirit to fight for you.</p>
	<p>Summon Stone Creature:</p> <p>Effect: Summons Stone Creatures to fight for you.</p>
	<p>Summon Fire Demon:</p> <p>Effect: Summons Fire Demons to fight for you.</p>










	<p>Divine Favor:</p> <p>Effect: Recovers your HP and that of your party.</p>
	<p>Divine Blessing:</p> <p>Effect: Increase your defense and that of your party.</p>
	<p>Divine Spirit:</p> <p>Effect: Summons Five-element fighters to fight against the enemies in a certain area.</p>
	<p>Ebon Turtle:</p> <p>Effect: Wizard's Martial Skill. Causes deadly damage to all the enemies around you. Available only when Anger is at maximum.</p>



8.2.4 Assassin's skills

	<p>Fang Xiang Cut:</p> <p>Effect: Basic close-quarters attack skill.</p>
	<p>The Remorseless Heart:</p> <p>Effect: Attacks an individual enemy. Can be used to make up a combined skill.</p>







	<p>Windsong:</p> <p>Effect: Attacks all the enemies around you. Can be used to make up a combined skill.</p>
	<p>Sweep the Clouds:</p> <p>Effect: Long-range attack skill. Attacks a row of enemies. Can be used to make up a combined skill.</p>
	<p>Fire Rides the Sky:</p> <p>Effect: Attacks an individual enemy. Can be used to make up a combined skill.</p>
	<p>Lightning Strike:</p> <p>Effect: Individual powerful attack skill. Can be used to make up a combined skill.</p>
	<p>Startling Thunderclap:</p> <p>Effect: Lessens the duration of abnormal state for yourself and your party members.</p>
	<p>Shadowless:</p> <p>Effect: Increases your own dodge rate and movement speed for a specific duration.</p>
	<p>Shooting Star:</p> <p>Effect: Increases your strike rate and attack speed for a specific duration.</p>









	<p>Snake Crawls on His Belly:</p> <p>Effect: Quickly move to the destination. Increases your own dodge rate for a specific duration.</p>
	<p>Stars Fall and Clouds Disperse:</p> <p>Effect: Assassin's Martial Skill. Attacks all the enemies in front of you. Available only when Anger is at maximum.</p>

8.2.5 Paladin's skills

	<p>Harvest Horns:</p> <p>Effect: Close-quarters attack skill. Attacks an individual enemy.</p>
	<p>Split Asunder:</p> <p>Effect: Close-quarters attack skill. Attacks many enemies in front of you.</p>
	<p>Return to the Fold:</p> <p>Effect: Individual powerful attack skill.</p>
	<p>Flying Dragon, Dancing Phoenix:</p> <p>Effect: Creates many avatars to attack enemies.</p>

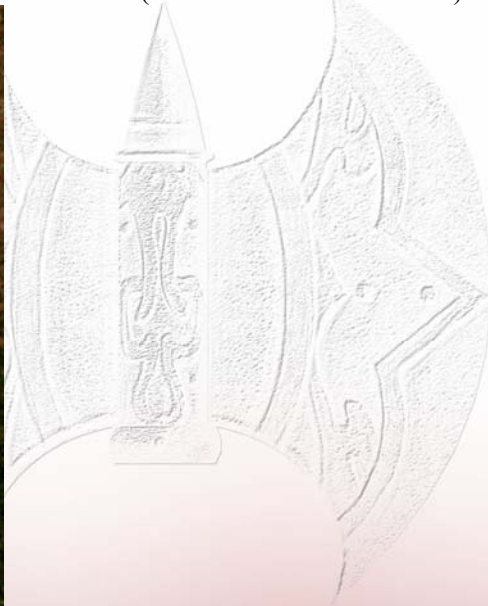


	<p>The Diving Dragon Ascends to Heaven:</p> <p>Effect: Jump to a specific place. Increases your own attack in a short time.</p>
	<p>Meditate to Rest:</p> <p>Effect: Increases your own HP recovery for a specific duration.</p>
	<p>Indestructible:</p> <p>Effect: Reduces the damage to you for a specific duration. Cannot move for a specific duration.</p>
	<p>Imperial Aerial Defense:</p> <p>Effect: Increases your own strike dodge rate for a specific duration.</p>
	<p>Protecting the Body with the Golden Bell:</p> <p>Effect: Increases your own defense for a specific duration.</p>
	<p>Thunder's Might:</p> <p>Effect: Increases your own attack for a specific duration.</p>
	<p>Black Dragon:</p> <p>Effect: Paladin's Martial Skill. Attacks all the enemies in a certain area. Available only when Anger is at maximum.</p>

8.3 Hotkey Skills

8.3.1 Left and right-handed skills

Click on the left (10) and right-handed default skill buttons (11) to change the relevant default skills (also see **6.1 Control Panel**).



Click on the button 11 (3), all the current right and left-handed skills will pop up. To make a skill as the default skill, just click on the skill icon. (See the above picture.)

8.3.2 Allocate shortcut skills

Players can define a total of 10 shortcut skills for each of their characters. In battles, use shortcut keys to swiftly change the skills you want.

Click on the button 11 (3) on the Control Panel, all the current right and left-handed skills will pop up. To define a shortcut key for a skill, just move the cursor upon the skill icon and then press the relevant key on your keyboard. (Q, W, E, R, T and A, S, D, F, G can be allocated for shortcut skills).





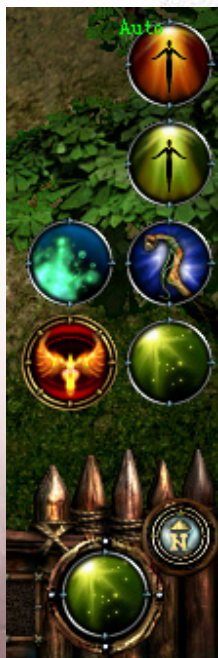
After that, the corresponding shortcut keys will appear beside the skill icons as shown in the above picture. Now just press the shortcut keys to switch to the skills you want.

Players can allocate a skill to both the left and right-handed default skills at the same time. For example, after allocating Beastman's skill "Mantis Strike" to Q and A, players can change the left and right-handed skills to "Mantis Strike" by pressing Q and A.



8.3.3 Define Auto-skills

When heroes encounter enemies and no Auto-skills have been defined, heroes will automatically attack with left-handed default skill. If players have defined Auto-skills before, heroes will automatically use these skills, e.g. automatically heal, cast spells, summon, switch long-range/close-quarters attacks and individual/group attacks. This enables players to make more complicated strategies.



To define an Auto-skill, just click on the button 11 (3) on the Control Panel and then move the cursor upon the skill and then right-click. If the skill has been successfully defined as an Auto-skill, a green A mark will appear on the skill icon. Do the process again and the Auto-skill will be cancelled.

Note: If there is not an Auto-skill defined, the left-handed skill will be always used automatically no matter whether players have defined the skill as an Auto-skill or not. When heroes accept an instruction from players, such as run or use left-handed default skill to attack, no other skills will be automatically used including Auto-skills.



9. ITEMS

There are numerous items in the game including the weapons and armor used by the heroes, medicine, scrolls and some items closely related to quests.

Getting familiar with these items will be very helpful.

9.1 Item Type

Lan Wei

Weapons: Staff of Sacrifice is the most important weapon for a witch. Besides increasing attack power, it is also the symbol of position and status for witches. Lan Wei can equip four kinds of weapons: Staff of Sacrifice, Magic Staff, Staff of Power and Crystal Staff.



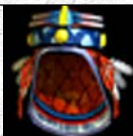
Clothes: Since witches often cast spells, they cannot wear heavy armor. Light and brilliant brocade clothes become the most common defense



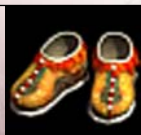
equipment for them. Lan Wei can equip three kinds of clothes: Fancy Clothes, Embroidered Cape and Silk Clothes.



Hats: A witch's hats are of decoration more than protection. They often wear beautiful and fully-decorated hats to sing and dance to thank the Gods. Lan Wei can equip three kinds of hats: Jeweled Coronet, Fancy Coronet and Silk Headban.



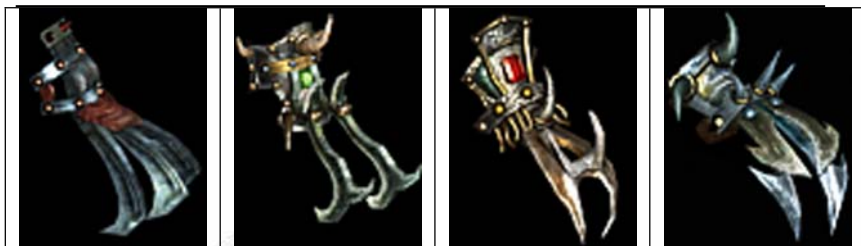
Shoes: Witches usually walk around their tribe to carry out a sacrifice ceremony. A pair of light shoes is suitable for them to do their job well. Lan Wei can equip three kinds of shoes: Motley Shoes, Embroidered Shoes and Silk Shoes.



Liang Hu

Weapons: Beastman's weapons are modeled on animals. This kind of weapon can enhance Beastman's fighting ability. Liang Hu can equip four kinds of weapons: Paw, Hook, Fork and Tooth.

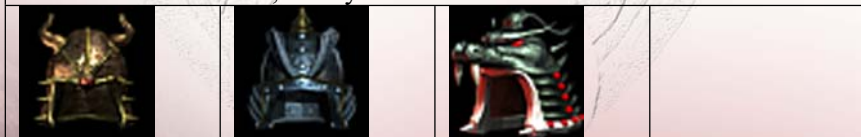




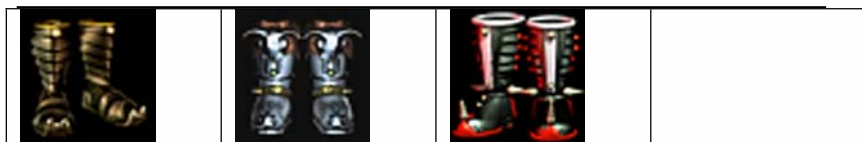
Armor: Beastman's armor is very heavy and thick and it is made by means of ancestral methods. It, therefore, is said the armor has mysterious power. Liang Hu can equip three kinds of armor: Scale Armor, Heavy War Armor and Totemic Armor.



Helmets: Beastmen always maintain a high will to fight. These helmets demonstrate their violent personalities. Liang Hu can equip three kinds of helmets: Scale Helmet, Heavy War Helmet and Totemic Helmet.

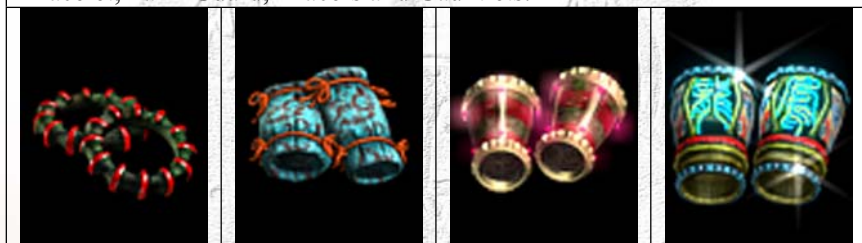


Boots: Beastman warriors excel in close-quarters fighting. With fighting boots, their feet can also be powerful weapons. Liang Hu can equip three kinds of boots: Scale Boots, Heavy War Boots and Totemic Boots.



Yan Hong

Weapons: Wizard's main work is to serve the Gods and heal sick people. With mysterious and powerful ancient spells, everything in their hands can be used as weapons. Yan Hong can equip four kinds of weapons: Bracelet, Palm Guard, Bracers and Gauntlets.



Armor: During a sacrificial ceremony, a wizard will wear a suit of specific robes to show his worship to the Gods. Usually in a tribe, once a wizard is titled, he will wear brilliant sacrificial robes. Yan Hong can equip three kinds of robes: Wizard's Robe, Sacrificial Robe and Battle Robe.



Hats: During a solemn sacrificial ceremony, a wizard should wear a specially-made hat to demonstrate his power and position. Yan Hong can



equip three kinds of hats: Wizard's Headpiece, Sacrificial Headpiece and Warrior Helm.

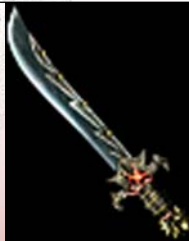
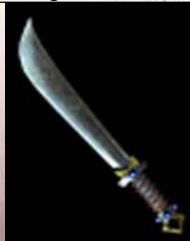


Boots: Although wizards always walk with their bare feet to show their strong will to serve the Gods, they usually will wear shoes during a sacrificial ceremony. Yan Hong can equip three kinds of boots: Wizardly Boots, Sacrificial Boots and Warrior's Boots.



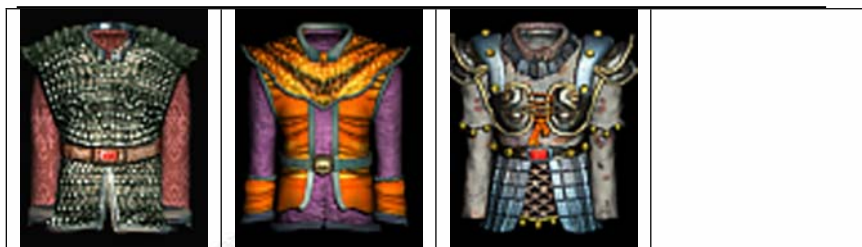
Cai Xin

Weapons: Assassins are very much concerned with dexterity. They, therefore, usually choose light weapons. Cai Xin can equip four kinds of weapons: Short Blade, Light Blade, Scimitar and Miao Blade.

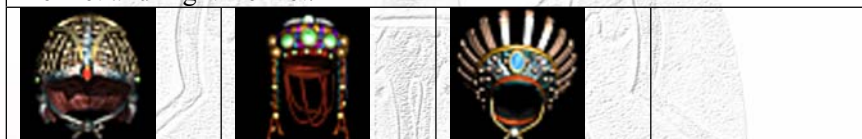


Armor: Heavy armor will reduce an assassin's dexterity. So an assassin will usually choose a suit of light armor. Cai Xin can equip three kinds of armor: Chain Mail, Padded Armor and Light Armor.





Helmets: Assassins' helmets are small and light. These helmets not only can protect wearers but also won't hamper their movement. Cai Xin can equip three kinds of helmets: Chain Coif Wizard's Headpiece, Soft Helmet and Light Helmet.



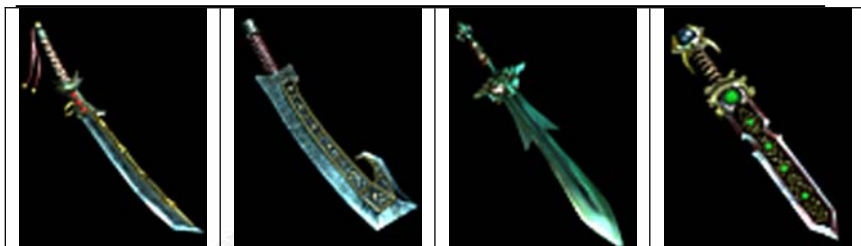
Shoes: Movement plays an extremely important role in assassins' Kung Fu. A pair of light boots is necessary for assassins. Cai Xin can wear three kinds of boots: Chain Boots, Soft Boots and Light Boots.



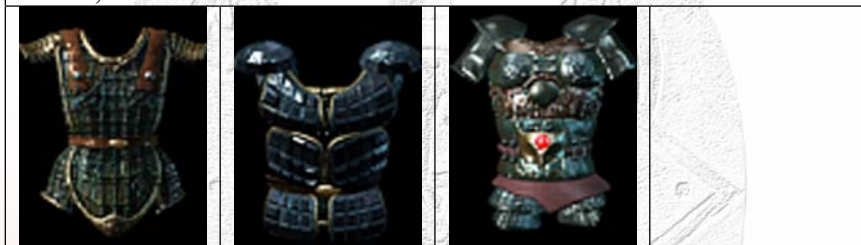
Gai Nie

Weapons: Paladins usually excel in all kinds of weapons, but blades and swords are their favorites. Gai Nie can equip four kinds of weapons: Falchion, Broadsword, Longsword and Sword.

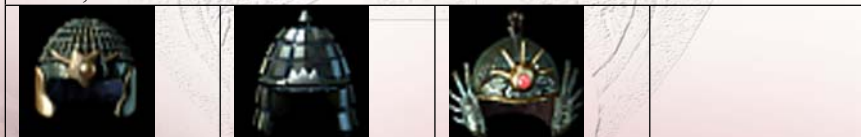




Armor: Paladins have a balanced build. Even wearing heavy armor, they can still act very quickly. Gai Nie can equip three kinds of armor: Battle Armor, Bamboo Armor and Iron Armor.



Helmets: Metal helmets are much more solid than cloth hats and can provide better defense. Gai Nie can equip three kinds of helmets: Battle Helm, Bamboo Helm and Iron Helm.



Boots: Although metal boots are heavy, those will provide better protection for paladins. Gai Nie can equip three kinds of boots: Armored Boots, Bamboo Boots and Iron Boots.



Common Equipment

Clothes: Common clothes. Although clothes are not as solid as armor, these can still provide some defense. Any character can wear this equipment.



Hats: Common hats. People usually wear them to protect themselves in a rainy and windy day. But these hats can still provide some defense. Any character can wear this equipment.

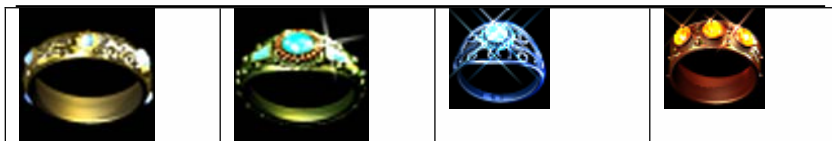


Shoes: Common cloth shoes. People usually wear them for walking. These shoes can only provide limited defense. Any character can wear this equipment.

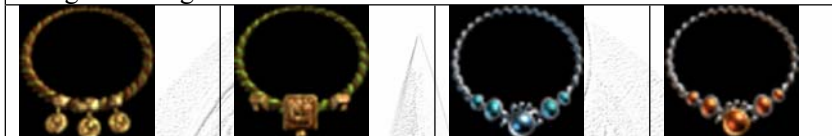


Ring: Common decoration. People believe wearing rings can bring wearers good luck.



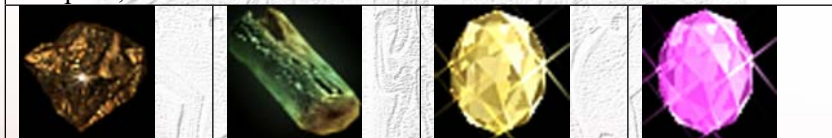


Necklace: Common decoration. People believe wearing necklaces can bring wearers good luck.

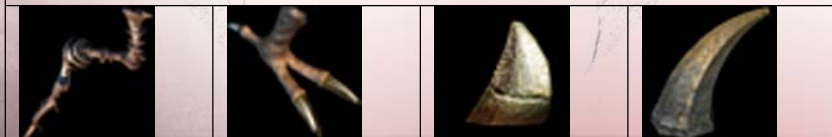


Item Creation Components

Common Components: These components can be used to create weapons, armor and decorations.



Weapon Components: These components can be used to create weapons. If you find some strange items in the game, think it over before dropping them. They may be valuable components for Item Creation.

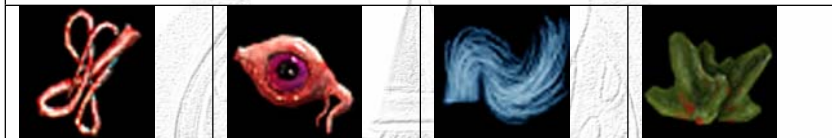


Armor Components: These components can be used to create armor. If you find some strange items in the game, think it over before dropping them. They may be valuable components for Item Creation.

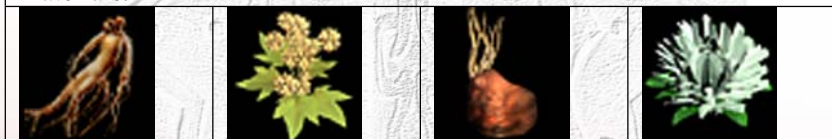




Decorative Components: These components can be used to create decorations. If you find some strange items in the game, think it over before dropping them. They may be valuable components for Item Creation.

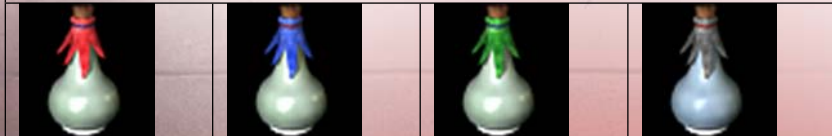


Medical Materials: These materials can be taken directly. But the effect will be better if you take the medicine made from these materials.



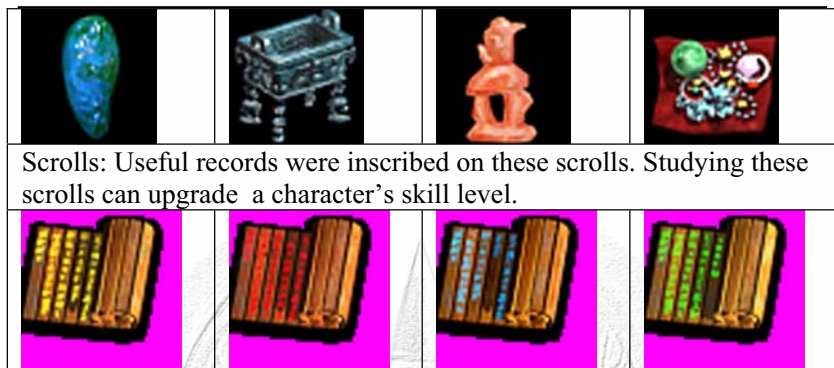
Other Items

Medicine: This is a dangerous adventure so you'd better prepare plenty of medicine. This medicine can restore your HP, MP and counteract abnormal effects.



Quest Items: There are many odd items in the game. Without them, you cannot complete some of the game's quests.





9.2 Controls Concerning Items

9.2.1 Item Interface

Click on the Item button or press “B” to open the item interface as below.





The buttons on the left side are:

Use: Use or wear items.

Equip: Open Equip interface.

Item Creation: Use all kinds of components to create equipment. The button will appear only after the Item Creation skill has been learned.

Upgrade: Use all kinds of components to upgrade equipment. The button will appear only after the Item Creation skill has been learned.

Exchange: Exchange items among different characters.

Drop: Drop items to the ground.

Sort: Move items to the relevant box automatically.

The number on the lower left corner of the interface stands for the amount of gold possessed by the party currently.

9.2.2 Shared Inventory

Besides the inventory for each character, there is a shared inventory for the party. Players can click on the Shared Inventory button on the character's inventory interface to open the inventory.

The buttons on the Shared Inventory interface are:

Inventory: character's inventory.

Shared Inventory: shared components for all kinds of equipment.

Weapon Inventory: components for weapons.

Armor Inventory: components for armor.

Decorative Inventory: components for decorations.

Medicine Inventory: all kinds of materials for medicine.



9.2.3 Use Items

Materials for medicine, medicine and scrolls are the items which can be used directly. To use an item, left-click on the “Use” button on the inventory interface, the cursor will change, and then left-click on the item. The item will disappear after it has been used.

Alternatively, left-click on the item and take it and then left-click on the character image on the inventory interface.

The easiest way is to right-click the item to use.

9.2.4 Exchange Items

Click on the “Exchange” button on the left side of the inventory interface, two characters’ inventory will pop up simultaneously. At that time, players can move items from one’s inventory to the other’s inventory.

Alternatively, players can take an item and left-click on a character’s portrait.

9.2.5 Drop Items

Left-click on the “Drop” button, the cursor will change, and then click on the item you want to drop. Alternatively, you can take the item and left-click the place outside the inventory interface.



9.2.6 Piled Items

Medicine and materials for medicine can be piled up. The number on the lower right corner of the box stands for the number of the item. Each box can hold at most 9 items at one time. When you pick up an item, if the item can be piled up and there are some of the same items in your inventory, the picked-up item will be piled up together with the previous ones automatically.

Hold the left button of the mouse on some piled-up items, the whole pile of items can be taken.

9.2.7 Shortcut Item Boxes

There are eight shortcut item boxes for each character. Players can put some items into them. In this way, the space in the inventory will be saved and players can use these items quickly in an emergency.

Right-click on the item to use or press F1-F8 to use the item in the relevant shortcut item box.

Such items as medicine, materials for medicine, weapons, and armor can be put into shortcut item boxes for quick-use in emergency.

9.3 Equip Weapons and Armor

Weapons and armor can take effect only after these are equipped.



9.3.1 Equip Interface

Click the Equip button or press N to open the Equip interface as below.



Each character has up to 6 equipment boxes:

Left: Weapon

Top: Helmet

Right top: Necklace

Right below: Ring

Center: Armor

Below: Boots

9.3.2 How to equip

Open the Equip interface and then put the item into the relevant place or just right-click on the item you want to equip.

Players may see some boxes are in red. It means that these items cannot be used now. It may be because the character cannot use the item at all or the requirements of using the item haven't been met.

Shortcut item boxes enable players to use the items in the boxes quickly.

Once a new item is equipped, the change of the character's attributes will be displayed on the upper right corner of the screen.



9.4 Item Attributes

9.4.1 Item's Five-element attributes

Most of the items have an icon indicating Metal, Wood, Water, Fire and Earth beside them. Five-element attributes will greatly influence the character. For example: Metal weapons attack with Metal power; Metal armor has better defense against Metal attacks, but worse defense under Fire attacks according to the inter-relationship of the Five Elements. In addition, an item's Five-element Attributes may influence another item. (See also **9.5 Concealed Attributes of Items**)

Requirements	Details
Level	To equip an item, characters must reach the required level. Otherwise, the item will be in red color.
Five-element Attributes	If there is a Five-element icon beside the item, it means that the item has a Five-element attribute. The Five-element weapon can attack with the same Five-element power, e.g. Fire weapon can attack with Fire power. A certain piece of Five-element armor has better defense against the attack of the attribute which the armor's attribute restricts, e.g. Fire armor has better defense against Metal attacks (Fire restricts Metal). In addition, an item's Five-element Attributes may influence another item. (See also 9.5 Concealed Attributes of Items)
Attributes	To equip an item, the character's Five-element attribute must reach a certain level. Otherwise, the item will be in red color.



9.4.2 Item's Secondary Attributes

See the table below:

Secondary Attributes	Descriptions
Attack Power	Damage to the target. Usually appears on weapons. Five-element attributes determine attack attributes, e.g. Metal weapons have Metal attack power and Wood weapons have Wood attack power.
Defense	Defense against the attack. Usually appears on armor. A Five-element defense will have 1.33 times of defense against its restricted attribute attack and 0.66 times of defense under its restricting attribute attack, e.g. a piece of armor with +100 Metal defense will have 133 defense against Wood attack and 66 defense under Fire attack.
Rear Attack	Increases the damage of rear attack. This usually appears on Metal equipment.
Attack while wounded	Increases attack for a specific duration when the character is wounded. This usually appears on Metal equipment.
Critical Attack	Causes double damage to the target. This usually appears on Metal equipment.
Rebound Damage	Rebound damage occurs when the character is under close-quarters attack. This usually appears on Metal equipment.
Deadly Attack	Causes deadly damage to the target. Deadly Attack only takes effect with Metal attack. The target will lose 1/3 HP at once. But for Bosses, the damage will be reduced.



	This usually appears on Metal equipment.
Max HP	Increases the max HP of the character. This usually appears on Wood equipment.
HP Recovery	Speeds up HP recovery. This usually appears on Wood equipment.
HP Recovery after Each Kill	Restores some HP after the character kills an enemy. The higher the enemy's level, the more the character's HP restores. This usually appears on Wood equipment.
Poisoning Attack	Makes enemies get poisoned. Poisoning Attack will take effect only with Wood attack. Enemies who are poisoned will lose HP gradually. This usually appears on Wood equipment.
Max MP	Increases Max MP of the character. This usually appears on Water equipment.
MP Recovery	Speeds up character's MP recovery. This usually appears on Water equipment.
MP Recovery after Each Kill	Restores some MP after the character kills an enemy. The higher the enemy's level, the more the character's MP restores. This usually appears on Water equipment.
Freezing Attack	Makes enemies get frozen. Freezing Attack will take effect only with Water attack. Frozen enemies will move and attack slowly. This usually appears on Water equipment.
Drive Back	Drives enemies backwards. When Drive Back exceeds 100, it may knock down enemies.
Strike	Makes attack hit on the target more. This usually appears on Fire equipment.
Dodge	Reduces the hits on the target. This usually appears on Fire equipment.
Attack Speed	Increases attack speed.



	This usually appears on Fire equipment.
Movement Speed	Increases the speed when the character is running. This usually appears on Fire equipment.
Dodge Rate	Increases the success possibility of avoiding being hit. This usually appears on Fire equipment.
Flaming Attack	Sets enemies afire. Flaming Attack will take effect only with Fire attack. Enemies afire will suffer double damage. This usually appears on Fire equipment.
Damage Reduce	Reduces damage.
Anti-shock	Reduces the possibility of being interrupted, driven backwards and the damage of Rear Attack. This usually appears on Earth equipment.
Anti-Abnormal	Reduces the possibility and duration of being in abnormal state. This usually appears on Earth equipment.
Exorcism Attack	Makes it possible that the character's attack can disable the effect of enemies' front condition. This usually appears on Earth equipment.
Vertigo Attack	Causes enemies to experience a state of vertigo. Vertigo Attack will take effect only with Earth attack. Those enemies in the state of vertigo cannot attack and move. This usually appears on Earth equipment.



9.5 Concealed Attributes of Items

You may obtain some items with Concealed Attributes in dark color. These attributes are useless unless the item is activated. To activate an item with concealed attributes, just equip another item which can promote the item at the corresponding place. An animation will play after you succeed and the color will become bright.



As shown in the above picture, this weapon is of Wood attribute. If you wear a Water ring, the concealed attribute will be activated.



The activation relationship is: Ring activates Weapon, Boots activates Armor, Necklace activates Helmet.



Five-element promotional relationships are as follows: Water promotes Wood, Wood promotes Fire, Fire promotes Earth, Earth promotes Metal, and Metal promotes Water.

Concealed Attributes can grow. After you activate concealed attributes and kill enemies, the concealed attributes will grow gradually.

Besides Five-element attributes, you can also equip a set of equipment to activate the concealed attributes. For details, please see below.

9.6 A Set of Equipment

There are many sets of equipment in the game. If you find a set of such equipment and equip it on yourself, you will obtain extra awarded attributes.

As shown in the picture below, after you equip a set of equipment, the frame of the equipment window will change. You may find extra awarded attributes on the main components of the set of equipment, usually weapons and armor.





If you equip only parts of the set of equipment, you may not obtain the awarded extra attributes, but the concealed attributes can still be activated.

There are two kinds of set of equipment: one is a set of ready-made equipment, such as Witch's Silk Clothes, Silk Headband and Silk Shoes (the same Five-element attribute); the other is a set of equipment made from the same animal or beast, e.g. panther's paw, skin, bone and etc.

A set of equipment will have similar names, e.g. panther paw sword, panther skin armor, panther bone ring and etc. This way players can easily recognize a set of equipment.



10. ITEM CREATION AND ITEM UPGRADE

10.1 Item Creation

Players can create a piece of new equipment with the materials they collect during their adventure. This is another way to obtain good equipment.

10.1.1 Material Classification

Type	Function
Common Material	Can be used to create all kinds of weapons, armor and decorations.
Weapon Material	Can only be used to create weapons.
Armor Material	Can only be used to create armor.
Decorative Material	Can only be used to create decorations.
Medical	Can be used to make medicine or can be taken directly



Material	to recover HP and MP.
----------	-----------------------

10.1.2 Material Collection

Players can obtain these materials by killing enemies, collecting ore and lumber in the wilderness and searching treasure boxes.

10.1.3 Item Creation Skills

Players can learn Item Creation Skills by completing some quests or searching for scrolls during their adventure. After players learn these skills, they can create all kinds of equipment.

There are four kinds of such skills: Eight Diagrams Item Creation, River Map Item Creation, Lou Book Item Creation and Five Elements Item Creation. Each one has its unique features.

Players can learn from blacksmiths how to upgrade their Item Creation skills at the cost of some gold.

10.1.4 How to create an item

After players learn Item Creation, there will be a “Create” button on the inventory interface, click on the button, the Create interface will pop up.

To create a piece of equipment, you need to do the following:
Choose the equipment classification: Weapons, Armor, Helmets, Boots, Rings and Necklaces.
Choose the hero type for whom the item will be equipped.



Now the method will appear on the interface. If you want to change the method, click on the relevant button at the top of the interface.

Put the components into the relevant box.

After all the required components are put into the box, the “Create” button will appear on the interface. (**Note:** If your Item Creation Skill hasn’t reached the required level, you cannot finish creating an item.)

Now you can name the item. Please note the name can only be added after the original name.





10.1.4 Five-element Promotion of Components

Between some of the material boxes, you may notice some arrows which indicate promotional relationships. If the target material can be activated, the produced equipment may possess extra attributes.





10.1.5 Tips for Item Creation

You can make high level equipment only after you learn high level item creation skills. Therefore, you should try your best to upgrade your Item Creation skills as high as possible.

A material's attributes are transferred to equipment produced from it. Therefore, the attributes possessed by a material are very important. Generally speaking, a material's attributes should be as good as possible and a material's level should be as high as possible when creating items with it.



The final product's classification is determined by the properties of material that outnumber all others. For example: if a piece of equipment is made from three iron rocks, one gold rock and two silver rocks, then the product possesses the iron classification. If two or more materials exist in equal quantities, then the classification of the final product is determined at random. The Five-element attribute of the final product will also be determined on the basis of the above rule.

Make good use of Five-element promotion theory and you will obtain good equipment.

When you just finish creating an item, you can name it.

10.2 Upgrade Equipment

You can use materials to upgrade your already made equipment. In this way your equipment will be improved and enhanced to suit you better.

10.2.1 How to upgrade your equipment

Click on the “Refine” button, the upgrade interface will pop up. Choose the equipment type and method, fill up the boxes with components and then click on the “OK” button.

10.2.2 Tips for Upgrade

Only weapons, helmets, boots and armor can be upgraded; Rings and necklaces cannot be upgraded.



Upgrade also needs Item Creation Skills. If the skill level is not high enough, the equipment cannot be upgraded to a higher level.

Only half the attribute value of the components can be transferred to the equipment.

After upgrade, some equipment cannot be used anymore for the reason of increased level.

When you just finish upgrading an item, you can name it.

11. CONTROL

11.1 The Space Button

Players can pause the game by pressing the Space key at any time. You can then change strategies, skills and weapons for every character and take medicine. After that, press the Space key again, the game will resume.



11.2 Other Shortcut Keys

Making good use of shortcut keys can make fighting much easier and more convenient. Below are the shortcut keys in the game:

Shortcut Key	Function	Shortcut Key	Function
1-3 (*1)	Select the relevant character in the party.	C	Open/Close the Character's Attribute interface.
~(*2)	Select all.	N	Open/Close the Inventory and Equip interfaces.
L	Open/Close the Quest/Log interface.	B	Open/Close the Inventory interface.
Z	Open/Close the Party interface.	V	Open/Close the Skill interface.
Q\W\E\R\T A\S\D\F\G	Shortcut Skills.	O	Open the Options interface.
Esc	Open System Menu.	Alt	Open the Ground Inventory interface.
F11	Quick-Save.	F12	Quick-Load.
F10	Clear up the screen.	F1 — F8	Shortcut Inventory.
Print Screen	Capture screenshots and save them in the folder of Screenshot.	TAB	Open/Close radar.



*1: Press 1-3 to choose a party member and then press the number key again, the screen will move with the character as the focus.

*2: This key is located left to the key “1” on your keyboard.

Advanced controls

Shift+left-click: choose a character.

Shift+hold the left button of the mouse: draw and drag the mouse to select multiple characters.

Shift+1-3/Shift+left-click the portrait of a character: include this character in the team.

Ctrl+left-/right-click: attack any target with left-/right-handed skill.

When the Shortcut Skills interface pops up:

Press Q, W, E, R, T, A, S, D, F and G to define shortcut skills.

Right-click on a skill icon to define the skill as Auto-skill.

Operations to your party member:

When you grasp an item and left-click on a member's portrait, the item will be given to the member.

Double click on a member's portrait to designate the member as party leader (the screen will move with the member as the focus).

Right-click on a member's portrait to use right-handed skill on the member (usually secondary skills).



12. CREDITS

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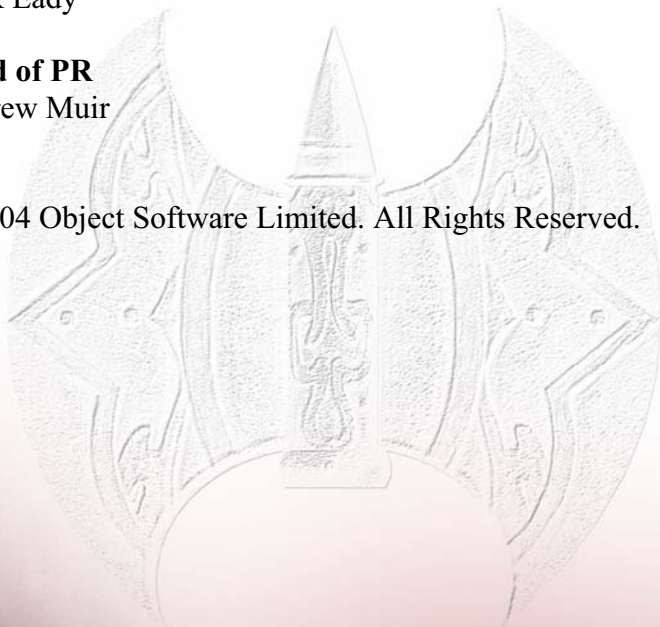
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Appendix I The Game Map

Appendix II The Concept of the Five Elements

The concept of the Five Elements is an ancient and enduring one in Chinese culture. It permeates all aspects of life, from daily living to spirituality to science. They are not true elements per se in the Western sense or tradition, but rather five states of the singular spiritual and material force known as qi. These states are given rather ordinary names: Metal, Wood, Earth, Water, and Fire. They are the most fundamental and ubiquitous components of existence, and their movement, their waxing, and their waning influences everything in the world.

The Five Elements have the following worldly correspondences, to name a few:

- Metal: white, Autumn, dry weather, West, lungs and large intestine, sorrow, pungent, spherical, Tiger and Venus
- Wood: green, Spring, windy weather, East, liver and gallbladder, anger, sour, rod-like, Dragon and Jupiter
- Earth: yellow, late Summer, humid weather, Center, spleen and stomach, calm, sweet, cubic, Phoenix and Saturn
- Water: black, Winter, cold, North, kidney and bladder, fear, salty, waveform, Tortoise, and Mercury
- Fire: red, Summer, hot, South, heart and small intestine, joy, bitter, triangular, Pheasant, and Mars

They do not exist in isolation of one another. Rather, they are a continuum. One fades into another, one influences the next, one transforms the subsequent. The Five Elements exist in a continual state of flux. They are always in motion, always influenced by changes in the physical and spiritual environment.



The Five Elements create or promote one another in the following order:

· Water to Wood to Fire to Earth to Metal to Water and so on.

The Five Elements destroy or restrict one another in the following order:

· Metal to Wood to Earth to Water to Fire to Metal and so on.

In the context of the game, the Five Elements are the heart of the magic and combat system. A character trained in their theory and philosophy can manipulate the elements to achieve certain supernatural effects. These types of people are colloquially called witches and wizards, although they do not fit the Western stereotypes those words conjure. A Chinese wizard is in charge of ritual sacrifices and interfacing with the spiritual realm, namely the various gods, goddesses, spirits, demons, and their consorts. His power to manipulate the Five Elements stems directly from the denizens of the spirit world, Heaven, and Hell and is more or less influenced by them. A witch on the other hand is able to manipulate the Five Elements through strength of will. She doesn't depend on other supernatural agencies or entities, but rather channels the elements through her body and controls them through sheer determination.

Every witch and wizard has his or her strong and weak points. For example, some are more talented at using Fire and weaker at using Water, the element in opposition to it.

Given the importance of the concept of the Five Elements to the game we are going to run through again the inter-promoting and restricting relations between the Five Elements as follows:- Water promotes Wood; Wood promotes Fire; Fire promotes Earth; Earth promotes Metal and Metal promotes Water. Please look at the picture below:





Inter-restricting relations: Metal restricts Wood; Wood restricts Earth; Earth restricts Water; Water restricts Fire and Fire restricts Metal.
Please look at the picture below:





Ying Zheng, the King of Qin, was a firm believer in the Theory of the Five Elements and embraced the theory of the cyclic revolution of the Five Elements which was very popular during the Warring States period. According to this theory the five elements, Metal, Wood, Earth, Water and Fire succeeded each other in an endless cycle, each destroying its predecessor to give a dominant character to the age. A sage ruler would harness the dominant element and use it along with its associated color and number to legitimize his rule. Ying Zheng chose Water as his element, Black as his paramount color and six as his paramount number.



Appendix III Historical Background

1. The Warring States Period

The Warring States Period lasted for over 250 years from 475 to 221 BC. During this time China was composed of seven different major states each named after a pre-dominant family. The seven states were Qi, Chu, Han, Zhao, Wei, Yan and Qin.

As the name of the period suggests it was a time of almost continuous brutal wars sometimes lasting months, sometimes lasting years. In the famous Battle of Changping more than 400,000 Zhao troops ran out of weapons and food and surrendered to the Qin army. Their fate was to be buried alive on the orders of the Qin General, Bai Qi. Even today the battlefield at Changping is covered with the white bones of those killed.

One of the pre-eminent philosophers of the Warring States period, Mencius, said of the cruelty of war at this time “After a battle for seizing territory, the battlefield would be strewn with corpses. After a battle for taking a city the city would be littered with dead bodies.”

But it was not only wars that terrorized the people during this time but also the absurd rivalry between the states which was capable of causing great hardship and suffering. Examples of this rivalry would be the use of neighbor's fields as drains, fighting for water from the Yellow River during periods of drought and breaking the dykes and flooding their neighbors when the River was full.

In the early years the Qin state was quite weak and wasn't even invited to meetings between the states to conclude treaties. In 356 BC Duke Xiao of Qin authorized the statesman Shan Yang to launch reform in



Qin. The purpose of the reform was to rule the state by law, reward those who had made contributions in farming or on the battlefield, abolish the land owning system of the past, recognize the private ownership of land and allow land to be bought and sold. Under this new system Qin was governed by a centralized military administration which applied the law impartially. All citizens were forced into productive occupations such as agriculture and the army and merchants and intellectuals were regarded as harmful.

Shang Yang was the first great legalist. Legalism was based on the idea that man is naturally evil and undisciplined and can only be kept in order by fear and harsh punishment. Such a policy may not encourage a happy population but it certainly had a dramatic effect on Qin's efficiency and it quickly became the most commercially dynamic and the most militaristic of all the states. Shang Yang did not, however, receive the rewards he might have expected as the author of such a successful policy. He was killed by conservatives who opposed his reform policy and his body was torn limb by limb by chariots.

Invigorated by the reform policy launched by Shan Yang Qin had, by the time of the rule of King Zhao (306 – 251 BC), become a powerful and prosperous state with an army of one million troops and grain and fodder were in abundant supply. King Zhao of Qin had succeeded in breaking through the alliance formed against Qin by the other six states by using a strategy proposed by Fan Sui "Make friends with distant states and attack the neighboring ones". In using this policy King Zhao was able to weaken the other states one by one until, in the end, only Qin was strong enough to unify the country.

In 259 BC Ying Zheng, the future First Emperor of Qin, was born. In 246 BC his father, King Zhuang Xiang of Qin, died and he became King Zheng of Qin at the age of 13. At first his mother and the Prime



Minister, Lu Buwei, ruled as regents. This had its complications as the Queen mother was previously the concubine of Lu Buwei. The regency unraveled when Lu, nervous of the Queen Mother's amorous advances towards him, smuggled a famously virile protégé of his into the palace disguised as a eunuch. The scandal that later erupted cost Lu Buwei the Premiership and later his life when he committed suicide following receipt of a letter from the King denigrating his contribution to Qin. From 238 BC onwards Zheng ruled alone.

2. The Unification Campaign

King Zheng launched his unification campaign in 231 BC with an attack on Han. Han, which had been greatly weakened in previous wars with Qin, quickly succumbed.

Next was the State of Zhao. Zhao was a powerful military state and had a superb military commander in Li Mu. In 229 B.C. Qin struck with two generals Wang Jian and Yang Duan leading two armies to attack on two sides. Zhao ordered Li Mu and Sima Shang to resist. After fierce fighting the military situation was deadlocked. Qin then bribed the Prime Minister of Zhao to slander Li Mu and accuse him of plotting treason. The foolish King of Zhao had Li Mu replaced and ordered him jailed and subsequently killed on the false charge of disobeying his orders. This unwise act against a great military hero of the Zhao state destroyed the morale of the Zhao Army and Zhao was soon defeated.

Now the Qin army marched north to the Yi River which bordered the State of Yan. Yan was a large but weak and thinly populated state far away from the Central Plains. Its king and his ministers were greatly dismayed at the impending danger. Dan, the Crown Prince of Yan, had previously been a hostage in Qin and was bitter about his poor



treatment there. He suggested that Yan should try to assassinate the King of Qin and proposed that Jing Ke be given the honor of making the attempt.

In a famous incident Jing Ke failed in his attempt to assassinate Ying Zhen with a dagger concealed in a map he was about to show the king. He slipped at a critical moment and was cut to pieces by the King and his soldiers. In a fury the King of Qin dispatched more troops and attacked Yan. Ji, the capital of Yan, quickly fell and the king of Yan and Prince Dan fled. Four years later Yan was finally conquered and its king captured.

In 225 BC General Wan Ben laid siege to Daliang, the capital of the State of Wei, and diverted the Yellow River to flood the city. Three months later the city's walls were breached and the King of Wei surrendered.

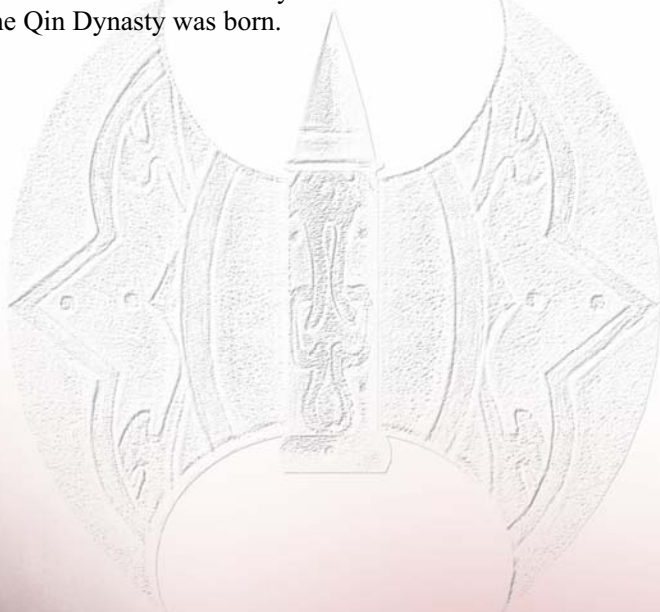
In 224 BC the King of Qin ordered General Li Xin to attack Chu with 200, 000 troops. Chu was the most powerful of the states, apart from Qin, and the old General Wang Jian had previously advised the King of Qin that an army of at least 600, 000 was necessary to defeat Chu. The king disagreed. However, Li Xin suffered a huge defeat when he underestimated the enemy and advanced recklessly.

Wang Jian was then begged to come out of retirement to take command of the Qin army. The size of the army was increased to 600, 000 men as required by the General. Wang Jian used the tactic of “waiting leisurely for the enemy to relax” and refused to engage the Chu army in battle. When he judged the right moment had arrived he ordered his men to attack an ill-prepared enemy and took the Chu capital, Shouchun, in a lightning strike and captured Fuchu the King of Chu.



Finally, in 221 BC the Qin army attacked Qi. The foolish and corrupt King Jian of Qi relied entirely on his incompetent ministers to rule his state and was completely unprepared for the attack. The Qi army surrendered without putting up a fight.

So in 221 BC China was finally united for the first time in its history and the Qin Dynasty was born.



Appendix IV Jing Ke : Hero Assassin

Seal of Evil is set in 227/226 BC at around the same time Jing Ke failed in his attempt to assassinate the King of Qin. In fact Jing Ke's assassination attempt is featured in the dialogue of Seal of Evil.

It is said that Jet Li's character in the movie "Hero" was modelled on Jing Ke and certainly the scene in which Jet Li's character is received by the King at his Palace is strikingly similar to the scene we know took place when the monarch received Jing Ke at Xiangyang Palace in the spring of 226BC.

Jing Ke was a travelling swordsman. He came from the state of Wei where his family had produced public officials for generations. Once he offered advice to the King of Uei regarding state governance. But the King refused to adopt his ideas.

In 227 BC the Qin state attacked the state of Yan. Shortly thereafter a Qin General named Fan Yuji abandoned his post and fled to the state of Yan. At this time Crown Prince Dan of Yan was held hostage in Qin and because of the ill treatment he suffered he felt even greater than normal resentment towards Ying Zheng, the King of Qin.

He, therefore, hatched a plot to kidnap the King of Qin and force him to restore sovereignty to the states he had annexed and promise not to attack in future. If the King refused he would be killed. Jing Ke was recommended to the Prince as



the ideal person to execute the kidnap. The Prince readily agreed.

When Jing Ke was approached regarding the plan he agreed to it enthusiastically. He and the Prince began working on a detailed plan. The Prince had already acquired the famous dagger of Madam Xu with a considerable sum of money and had it tempered with poison.

It was, however, going to be extremely difficult to get close to the King as he was widely detested and was always heavily guarded. Jing Ke had thought about this and advised the Prince to send him to see the King with the map of Dukang and the head of General Fan Yuki. The map of Dukang was the top military secret of the State of Yan showing the location of all the state's fortresses. Jing Ke said to the Prince:-

“If he receives these two things Ying Zheng will surely be overjoyed and relax his guard. I can hide the dagger in the roller of the map of Dukang beforehand. When Ying Zheng opens the map the dagger will appear at the end of the map and I will seize him at that instant.”

The Prince accepted the plan and immediately began to implement it. At the time the state of Qin was in mourning for the death of the Queen Mother. Many states who were fearful of the Qin state sent messengers to Qin to express their



condolences. The state of Yan took this opportunity to send a special messenger from Crown Prince Dan who paid his respects to the King of Qin in secret and said that after the funeral the state of Yan would send another special messenger to present to him the map of Dukang and the head of General Fan Yuki.

Although he was supposed to be in mourning for the death of his mother the King of Qin was ecstatic that he would have access to the map of Dukang and also have the satisfaction of receiving the head of General Fan whom he despised.

So far so good for the conspirators. During the winter of 227/226 BC Prince Dan treated Jing Ke and General Fan as highly honoured guests and showered them with all the luxuries they desired. But as winter gave way to spring a messenger arrived from the state of Qin and brought word that the King of Qin wished to see the map of Dukang and Fan Yuki's head without delay and would seize them by force if they were not forthcoming.

Prince Dan began to worry and hinted to Jing Ke that it was time for him to go. But Jing Ke did not promise to go because he had received no word from the man he wanted to accompany him as his assistant messenger, his friend Tu Gouzhe. At last the person who had gone to find Tu Gouzhe came back and told Jing Ke his friend would join him in 3 days.



Jing Ke now knew the time was right to reveal the plot to General Fan who up to this point had been kept completely in the dark. He invited General Fan to drink with him one evening and when they were both semi-intoxicated he revealed his plan to the General. To his great credit the brave General immediately pledged his support for the scheme and straightaway slit his own throat with his dagger.

Now that the head of General Fan had been taken Prince Dan officially decided to send Jing Ke to the state of the Qin and gave a banquet to see him off at the long pavilion by the bank of the Yishui River. The banquet lasted from noon to sunset when the weather suddenly turned bad. Dark clouds gathered, strong winds blew and the waves on the Yishui River surged high.

With the sudden change in weather Prince Dan became anxious that Jing Ke might regard it as a bad omen and change his mind. The Prince said to Jing Ke:-

“The sun has set in the west and its getting late. Your friend Tu Gouzhe might be delayed on his journey. Please allow my subordinate warrior Qin Wu Yang to go with you.

This angered Jing Ke who lost his usual relaxed manner and he said loudly to the Prince:-



“Are you choosing the right man for a job like this? If someone only knows marching forward with a firm intention to die, irrespective of success or failure, he has mere brute courage. I’m not hesitant or afraid. I’m waiting for a friend who I believe will ensure our success. But since you insist, I must set off right away.”

That very evening Jing Ke set off for Xiangyang. He left with a full diplomatic contingent from the state of Yan and was accompanied by more than 10 Escort Chariots. All the guests at the banquet were there to see him off, but Jing Ke did not look back.

At Xiangyang they were received with a grand ceremony at Xiangyang Palace ordered by the King to which diplomats from other states were also invited. As the Yan diplomats approached the Palace they could see thousands of Qin warriors in shimmering armour standing motionless on either side of the Palace. On both sides of the steps leading up to the Palace there were a mass of civil and military Qin officials and diplomats from other states.

In the Palace itself it was also crowded with people and in the middle of the hall sat Ying Zheng, the King of Qin. He was smiling at Jing Ke as he approached. Although the King had expected to want a sight of the head of the hated General, in the end he decided not to look at it. Maybe he had caught a



sight at a distance of the terrifying look on Fan's face and had second thoughts.

The King said:

“Bring the map to me here and give Fan Yuki's head to the chamberlain of law enforcement and let him deal with it.”

With the map in his hands Jing Ke knelt beside the table at which the King sat and presented him with the map. The King unfolded the map and as he did so Madam Xu's dagger fell out. Instantly Jing Ke grabbed the dagger with his right hand and seized the King's sleeve with his left. Right away all the courtiers and ministers started to panic. Carrying a weapon before the King was unheard of, no one had any idea what to do.

The cowardly courtiers and ministers ran away while the brave ones fought with their bare hands. Meanwhile the King managed to tear himself away from Jing Ke's grasp. He immediately tried to draw his sword but failed because it was too long. In China at that time the length of an aristocrat's sword reflected his status. The King's sword was longer than the sword of any other monarch.

The King hid behind a bronze pillar and in the panic had forgotten to call the soldiers outside to enter the Palace. Luckily for the King the imperial physician, Xia Wuqie, was



in the Palace with his medical bag. At this crucial point he threw himself in front of Jing Ke and blocked his pursuit, so that the King could get away and catch his breath.

Then those Qin Ministers who had kept their poise and presence of mind yelled:-

“Your Majesty, please push your sword onto your back! Onto your back, your Majesty!”

The King did so and finally drew his huge sword out back handed. Now armed with his sword the King was emboldened and launched an attack on Jing Ke and cut off Jing Ke’s left leg with his first strike. Jing Ke fell to the ground and then launched his dagger with great force at the King, but he missed! The dagger hit a bronze pillar with a shower of sparks and fell harmlessly to the ground.

Jing Ke knew he had failed. Sitting cross legged against a bronze pillar he said to the King in an almost casual way:-

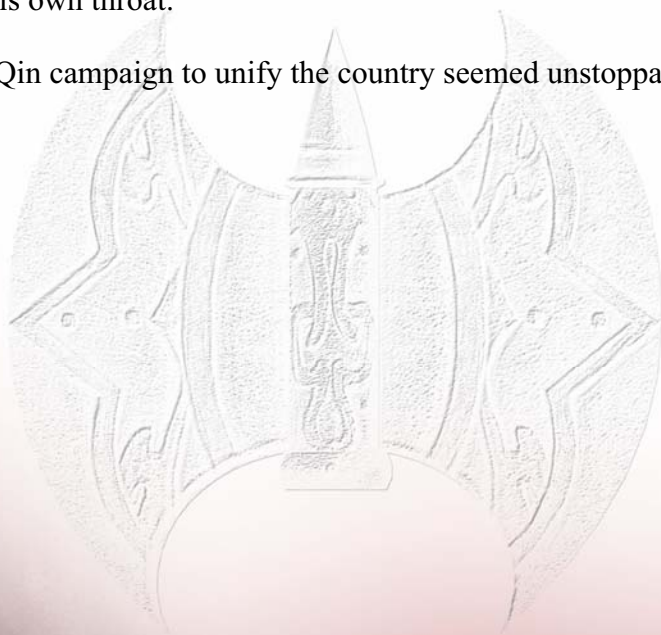
“You are lucky. If I had not meant to catch you alive and order you to sign a pledge to return sovereignty to the states, you would be a dead man by now.”

Jing Ke was then hacked to death by Qin soldiers called into the Palace by the King. Later his body was torn to pieces in public by five horses.



The attempted assassination naturally enraged the King of Qin and he ordered an almost immediate attack on the state of Yan. In 226 BC Qin troops captured Ji City, the capital of Yan. The King of Yan fled and shortly afterwards Crown Prince Dan slit his own throat.

The Qin campaign to unify the country seemed unstoppable.





S E A L O F E V I L

